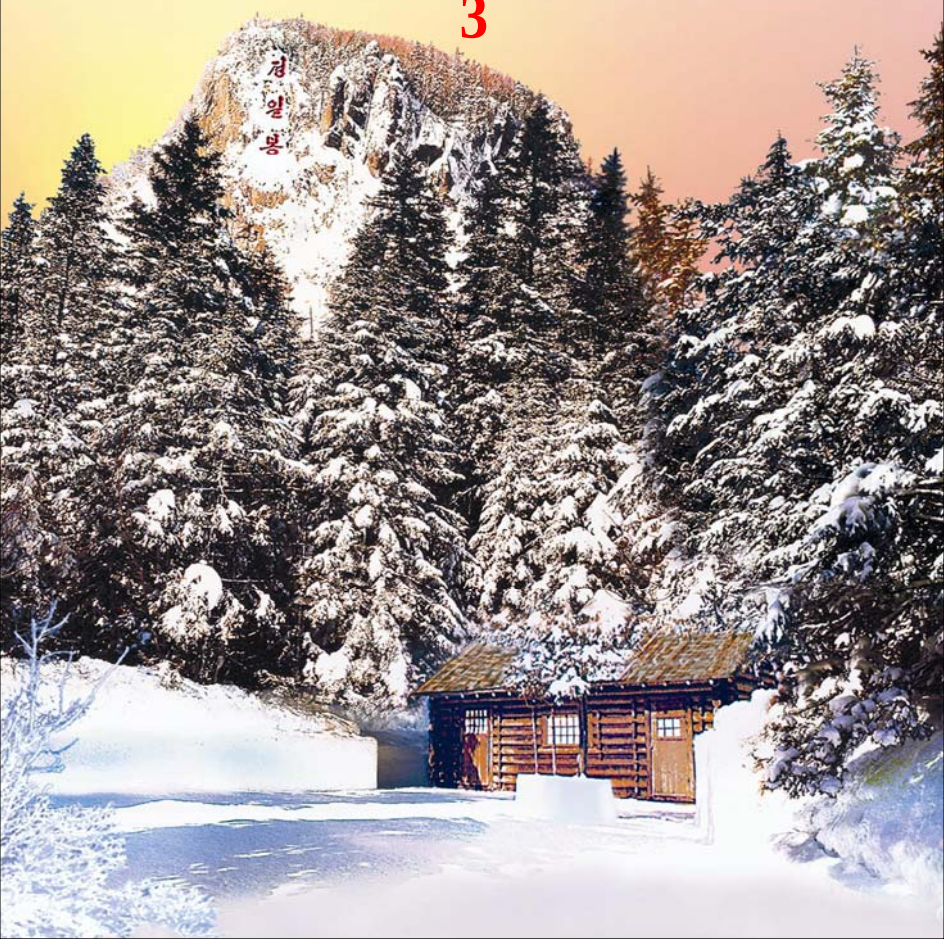


ANECDOTES OF KIM JONG IL'S LIFE

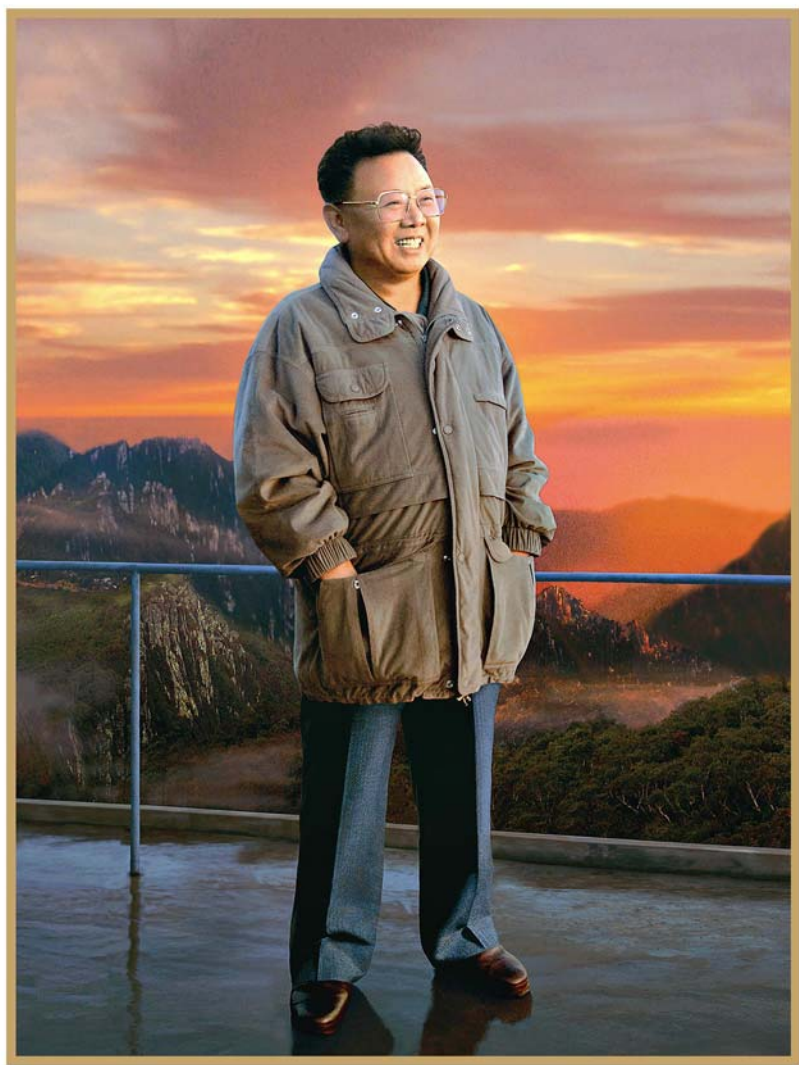
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ANECDOTES OF KIM JONG IL'S LIFE

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FOREIGN LANGUAGES PUBLISHING HOUSE
PYONGYANG, KOREA
JUCHE 105 (2016)





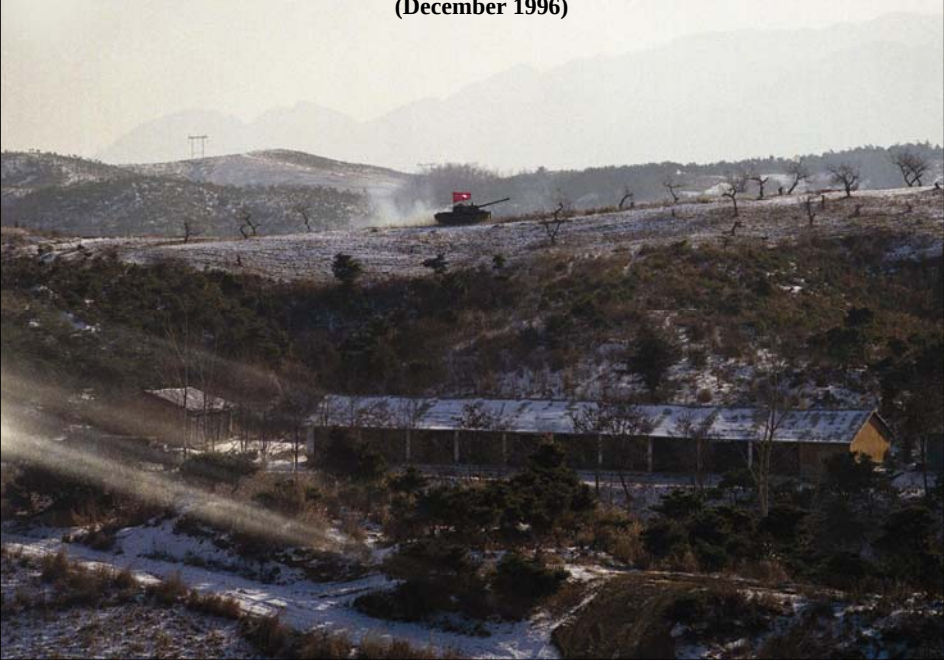
At the Kyonghung Shop (February 1988)



Waving back to the cheering people (July 1995)



**At the Seoul Ryu Kyong Su Guards 105th Tank Division
(December 1996)**





At the Samilpho Specialities Factory (April 2009)



In the newly-built Mansudae Street (October 2009)

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1. AFFECTION AND TRUST

Trotters from Nowhere

Follow one road for ever. To mark January 19, 1966, Kim Jong Il—this is a note written on the back side of a photograph of the Korean film star Yu Won Jun.

With this as his motto Yu worked in the cinema circles for scores of years, starring in numerous films and adding glory to the twilight of his life.

The following is what happened in those years.

He and his colleagues were spending days burning the midnight oil for on-site shooting, when news of his wife's delivery came. Having returned back home, he could see his wife and their newborn baby well looked after by the neighbours. He felt at ease and went back to the studio.

Soon the husband grew sorry for his wife as she was worried about the shortage of her milk. He had no time to obtain trotters, known as the tonic for a suckling mother. While chatting during a break, he confided his anxiety to his colleagues.

Some days later, he was greeted at home by his smiling wife, who thanked him for sending trotters for her and asked where he had obtained so many of them.

This abrupt question caught the husband off guard. He guessed that one of his colleagues had helped him, and decided to find and thank the man. Regrettably, his search ended in failure.

Three decades after that, the actor, now in his seventies, attended a party hosted by General Kim Jong Il.

The General filled a cup of wine for the old actor, saying that

he had taken much trouble for the recent production although he was at an advanced age.

The old man said in a tearful voice that he had not repaid him for his warm care.

Seeing tears gathering in his eyes, the General changed the subject to soothe him.

“You were once worried about your newborn baby as she could not be breastfed enough. How does she stand in your children?”

The actor was puzzled, all gazing at him. It was quite a distant memory and, after a while, he replied that she was his second daughter and she was already a mother.

The General said that time was flying and joked smilingly that the trotters, which he had sent for her, must have paid off.

The old father was dumbfounded.

Saying that he would tell about it as it was now an old story, the General began to explain: The day Yu's wife had the baby, the General was inspecting the studio. While talking with a director, he heard about the birth of the main character's child. Late at night, on the way back from his trip, he pondered over something and had his chauffeur drive towards a suburb. After obtaining the trotters there, he instructed the chauffeur to carry them to Yu's and give them to his wife without telling her who was sending them. Then he himself walked to his office.

After all, it took 30 years for Yu to find out who he should thank for the trotters.

Brother of a Young Martyr

A 9-year-old member of the Children's Corps, Kim Kum Sun, had been executed by the enemy during the anti-Japanese armed struggle.

The image of this girl was kept in Kim Jong Il's mind. He managed to find out her only brother Kim Ryang Nam and trained him to become a pillar of the country.

The Cowherd Blowing a Reed Pipe. One day, at the back end of blizzardy winter, Kim Jong Il was listening attentively to a tape-recorder in his car en route from Onchon County to Pyongyang.

Recorded on the tape was what President Kim Il Sung had said to film scriptwriters and directors.

“In the past when we were fighting in East Manchuria, there was a girl called Kim Kum Sun, 9, in the guerrilla zone. One day she came to her house to see her mother but was arrested by the enemy. The Japanese looked down on the girl, coaxing and intimidating her by various methods to make her reveal the secrets about the guerrilla zone. However, she refused to say anything. Even at the execution site the Japanese gendarmes placated her with the promises that she would be set free if she told the secrets. She spat on their faces and condemned them before being killed.”

After recollecting her heroic death the President said that he would be pleased if he could see any relative of hers.

The thought of her relatives weighed on Kim Jong Il's mind until his car arrived at Pyongyang.

Soon the General began to search for them, meeting the anti-Japanese revolutionary fighters who had worked in Wangougou at that time and the officials who had travelled around former battle sites for years to locate the children of fallen revolutionaries.

It was like looking for a needle in a haystack, but he managed to learn about the girl's family background.

... Her father Kim ThaeK Gyu was the chief of an underground revolutionary organization and her mother Choe Ok Bong, a

village head in a guerrilla zone. In the year when her younger brother was born her father was dragged off and killed by some men whose identity remained unclear. Though the mainstay of the family had gone, her mother worked harder than ever before. In the spring of 1934, when the Japanese “punitive” force raided Wangougou, she left her two-year-old son in the care of an old man who lived next door and threw herself into a battle to protect the evacuating villagers. She fought bravely to her dying breath. From then on the poor boy was carried around in search of suckling mothers. At 9 he became a landlord’s servant who looked after grazing cattle. Lamenting over his miserable fate, the teenager used to blow a reed pipe. ...

There was nobody who had ever seen him or knew his name, but Kim Jong Il persevered with his search.

One day he received a report to the effect that a music editor at the then Korean Documentary Film Studio, called Kim Ryang Nam, had a similar family background to the young martyr’s. He immediately sent an official to the film studio.

Late that evening he was reported on the following facts: The names of the editor’s parents were the same as Kim Kum Sun’s. When young, he was a landlord’s servant. During the day he looked after dozens of cattle on the fields and at night slept with them at the shed. He was subjected to all sorts of maltreatment and, just before the country’s liberation, happened to meet a distant relative of his father. He heard from the latter about his parents and sister. During the Fatherland Liberation War he attended a secondary school for war orphans abroad and, after the war, returned to his homeland. Endowed with a talent for music, he became a musician after graduating from the then Pyongyang Conservatory.

After listening to the official’s report, Kim Jong Il said, **“Kim Ryang Nam must be the brother of the Children’s Corps member Kum Sun. I tried hard for so long to find his**

whereabouts as I was not aware that he is working at the Korean Documentary Film Studio.”

He paced back and forth in great delight.

“But...” the official trailed off.

“But what?” asked the General.

After a moment’s hesitation the official said that the editor was worried about his father’s chequered past after reading a publication saying that Kim Thaek Gyu had been executed for involvement in the spy organization “Minsaengdan.”

Kim Jong Il was lost in deep thought for a good while. Then he said that they should report to the President about Kim Thaek Gyu and Kim Ryang Nam so that he would decide on this matter. He added that the President knew well about Kum Sun’s struggle and he was the very man who could vouch for her father.

The documents concerned were submitted to the President. He called up his old memories: The eyes of Kum Sun resembled those of her father, and Ryang Nam has similar eyes to Kum Sun’s. Ryang Nam must be the son of Kim Thaek Gyu. The Party should take care of him and train him to be an excellent official.

The President was very pleased that the only relative of Kum Sun was found out.

It was October 10, 1967.

Tearful Reunion. The editor was later promoted to work as an official of the Central Committee of the Workers’ Party of Korea. One day Kim Jong Il summoned him to his office.

He waited at the entrance to the building and, upon seeing the man, said, **“Comrade Ryang Nam, you are here at last. I am glad to see you.”**

The official was choking with gratitude and then made a deep bow, tears rolling down his cheeks.

The General soothed him, **“I have delayed meeting you for a few days because I wanted to see your smiling face, not the**

crying face of the former cowherd. Raise your head, please.”

But the official could not keep back his tears.

“Well, I know you have not wept yourself out. Please cry, venting your sorrow and agony of the past on me.”

Kim Jong Il waited for him to calm down. Offering him a seat, he said that he spared time to listen to his sorrowful past.

The official recounted in a tearful voice how he had gone through thick and thin.

The General could hardly steady himself, thinking of what he should do to console the man.

Some days later, he summoned the official again and told him how his parents had dedicated their lives to the revolution. After a long talk, he took out a small framed painting from his bookshelf and put it on the table.

It was an oil painting featuring the Children’s Corps member Kum Sun at the execution site, which he had long ago asked an artist to create.

Before being killed by the enemy, the young martyr is said to have shouted to the teary-eyed masses. “Why are you crying, dear fathers and mothers? Don’t cry. The revolutionary army soldiers will surely wipe out the enemy. You must fight staunchly until the day when the homeland is liberated. Down with the Japanese imperialists! Long live General Kim Il Sung! Long live the Korean revolution!” It seemed that the young martyr was making this fiery speech in the painting.

The General told the official to stand in front of it and said that he had asked the anti-Japanese war veterans, who had been in the same art troupe as his sister in those days, to assist in portraying the looks of the 9-year-old martyr. He emphasized that he must keep her image in mind, and told about the articles on her death carried in a magazine of the Comintern and *Kuguk Sinbo*.

He continued to stress that she could heroically meet her death at such a young age because she had been brought up in the embrace of Commander Kim Il Sung, giving a detailed account of her activities in

the children's art troupe at the Xiaowangqing guerrilla base.

Then he lifted the oil painting and gave it to the official.

Tears swelled up in his eyes as he was gazing at the picture of his dear sister, whom he had so much yearned for in those trying years.

Kim Jong Il, too moved to see their emotional reunion, stood long looking out of the window.

Afterwards, the official worked faithfully in support of Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il to the end of his life, rendering a great contribution to developing the country's musical art.

Bad Habit Relinquished

On May 3, 1970 an official reported to Kim Jong Il that some film artistes, who had been on a tour in the Chongjin area, donated their skin to save a worker from the jaws of death.

The General was somewhat surprised at the news. He spoke highly of their deed and asked who they were.

The official called the names.

Listening to them one by one, Kim Jong Il nodded, **"Uh huh,"** **"Aha!"** and **"Excellent!"**

Suddenly he was surprised to hear the name of an actress.

"Who? What's the name?"

The official repeated the name.

"It's true!" exclaimed the General with a loud laugh.

"Well, she donated her skin."

The actress had some shortcomings in her private life; among her studio colleagues she was known as too selfish.

While inspecting the studio, the General was much concerned about her.

One day he summoned her and advised: President Kim Il Sung knows you, but you are called a stinger. This is wrong. Human dignity cannot be traded for money. You behave selfishly caring

more about money or valuables than about your reputation among the people. Then you will find your life meaningless.

The actress swore in tears that she would never behave so.

But she was dogged by the bad habit.

Having learned that there was no substantial progress in her private life, the General told officials that they must help her quit her bad habit even if it might take longer than they expected. Then he proposed including her in a tour group of film artistes so that she could transform herself among the workers.

On the day they were leaving, he met her in person and advised that during the tour she must relinquish the old habit of selfishness while working with the smelters at the blast furnace.

Bearing his words in mind, she strove hard to improve herself and even donated her skin to save a worker in a critical condition.

Highly praising this beautiful trait, Kim Jong Il said:

This is not a simple matter. It is proof positive that the Party's policy of turning the creation and performance of art works into a process of transforming artistes on a revolutionary and working-class pattern is paying off in practice.

Then he underlined the need to give wide publicity to the artistes' laudable deed.

Feedback from the People

On June 2, 1977 Kim Jong Il telephoned a senior official of the Pyongyang Municipal Party Committee to inquire about production at a noodle factory. The General Association of Korean Residents in Japan had financed the construction of the factory to mark April 15, the birthday of President Kim Il Sung.

The official told him that on April 15 the factory was switched on and the inauguration ceremony held in late May, adding that it would soon go into mass-production.

“You mean mass-production,” repeated Kim Jong Il. After a moment’s pause, he said that it would be good to consult the opinions of the chairmen and ministers of the Administration Council and other citizens on the products and they should arrange a noodle fair to listen to their opinions.

This abrupt suggestion puzzled the official.

Stressing that the noodles were for the people and they should taste them first, the General said:

“It would be good to invite the chairmen and ministers to the Mangyongdae Chonsok Restaurant and the like, serve them with different kinds of noodles after boiling them for about five minutes and ask their opinions. It is also necessary to serve them with the noodles made of wheat flour or wheat-and-corn flour and listen to their opinions. The opinions of the people’s neighbourhood unit chiefs are important, too.”

Now the official understood his intention.

Soon afterwards, an instant noodle fair was opened at the Mangyongdae Chonsok Restaurant, attended by officials concerned and hundreds of neighbourhood unit chiefs in Pyongyang.

They ate a variety of noodles and commented that they were all delicious, their strips were tough and it was easy to cook them as it would take no more than five minutes.

The feedback from the people was reported back to Kim Jong Il. He said that as the instant noodles had already passed the test, they should be given ten out of ten, and he wrote *Passed* on the document.

Then the noodle factory was allowed to go into mass-production.

Proposal Disapproved

In 1979, to mark April 15, the birthday of President Kim Il Sung, the production of gifts for children across the country was going full steam ahead.

On March 27 Kim Jong Il went over their samples.

He was all smiles seeing the goods in living colours and of various shapes—clothes for kindergarten children, uniforms and shoes for students at primary and middle schools, colleges and universities, neckerchiefs for schoolgirls, buttons, etc.

He said, **“The President bestows great care on the students and other children of the country. They are indeed the happiest in the world.”**

Then he told officials that they should make scrupulous arrangements for the supply of the clothes and shoes.

They suggested that they be sold at retail prices.

In November the previous year the state had sold winter clothes to all the children of the country at very low prices, and it earmarked a huge sum for the ongoing production.

Taking the state’s financial burden into account, the officials made the above proposal.

After a moment’s thought Kim Jong Il said:

“In my opinion the clothes and shoes should not be sold to kindergarten children and students at retail prices. Then the parents with more than four children may not afford to buy the goods at once.”

He advised that they should reconsider their plan.

After all, the proposal for selling the goods at retail prices was disapproved, and all the children of the country received clothes, shoes and school things free of charge on the occasion of the April holiday.

The coffers of the state shrank but laughter of children in new clothes reverberated throughout the country.

The Site of a Smeltery Moved

It happened on September 25, 1980 when preparations were stepped up for building a smeltery in Sinhung County, South Hamgyong Province.

A senior official of the province received a call from Kim Jong Il.

To his surprise, the General asked how far it was from Hamhung to Sinhung.

Still confused, the official answered the question.

After repeating the distance to himself, Kim Jong Il asked in a serious voice whether the construction project in Sinhung would not have any impact on the supply of drinking water for the citizens in Hamhung.

Now the official understood why he was asking about the distance and said: Sinhung is in the upper reaches of the Songchon River, so if a smeltery is built there, the river will be polluted by refuse from the factory. This will jeopardize the safety of drinking water for Hamhung residents.

After listening to his explanation the General said that he was telephoning him because some days previously officials had proposed building the smeltery in Sinhung and he was concerned about the drinking water for Hamhung residents. Then he said in a resolute voice that the site of the smeltery must be moved.

The official was deeply touched by his close concern for the people.

He had heard that some officials, obsessed with economic profits, were pushing for the construction of the smeltery in disregard of the local conditions. So he had tried his best to have the construction plan shelved. To his disappointment, no one had lent an ear to his opinion.

As if reading his mind, Kim Jong Il asked if there was a suitable location for the smeltery.

Elated by this question, the official told him about the site he had chosen before.

The General said with satisfaction that if he had chosen the site of the smeltery where there was enough supply of electric power and water and it was convenient for transportation, he would immediately dispatch officials concerned to the province.

He emphasized that he should fix the site through careful consultation with them, before hanging up the phone.

Later, he was reported that a suitable site had been fixed for the construction of the smeltery.

Pleased at the news, he stressed that provision of raw materials, transportation and other factors should be taken into account when selecting the site of a factory, but it was most important to carefully consider the impact it would have on the people's living conditions.

Then he continued, **“We must never give a green light for the project that would have a detrimental effect on the people's living condition, however great its economic benefit may be.”**

Mahogany Doors

On the morning of April 18, 1984 Kim Jong Il was looking round the newly-built Hamhung Grand Theatre.

He halted at the door into the lounge on the second floor.

The officials in his company looked at him with a puzzled expression.

Studying the aluminium door for a while, he asked where it was made. He was told that it was made in the province and its quality had to be improved.

He advised that as the theatre was a national treasure of lasting significance, it should be furnished with good wooden doors.

After looking round some other rooms, he reiterated that all the aluminium doors should be replaced with those made of quality timber because the aluminium doors were not appropriate for the theatre and their quality was low.

He continued that as it was a theatre for the people, it should be furnished in a superb fashion, adding that the doors in it should be made of mahogany or other quality timber imported from a foreign country.

He asked the wide-eyed officials how many doors there were in the theatre.

“The doors for frequent use total about 40,” answered one of them.

Kim Jong Il repeated the number to himself and said that all of them should be replaced with those made of mahogany and other quality timber.

Mahogany occurs only in some forests of the tropical region.

Since olden times this quality timber has been used to make furniture for palaces and mansions. The price is so exorbitant that it has rarely been used for doors and other ordinary furniture.

An official advised against the use of the expensive timber.

Kim Jong Il smiled and asked him the total sum.

It was so great that the official held back from telling it.

With a composed look, the General urged him on, saying that he would take measures himself.

Now the official spoke it out but, still unperturbed, Kim Jong Il said, **“Is that so? All right. I will resolve the problem.”**

Later, the theatre was furnished with mahogany doors.

“Self-Reliant” Team Wins

On October 22, 1984 Kim Jong Il visited the then Ragwon Machine Factory.

The first thing which caught his eyes as he entered the large machine shop was a board bearing the slogan “Self-reliance.”

He studied the slogan with a meaningful look and moved to a table where the parts of the rotary rock-drill were placed.

He said that they were just what he had wanted to see, and inquired in detail about their production and performance.

Then he asked an official, **“What caused skepticism about the quality of Ragwon-brand rock-drill?”**

The official answered that some of their parts were defective and they were upgraded in the main.

The General said, **“Good. I know the workers of Ragwon have already laid the groundwork for the production of rock-drills, too.”**

He continued: The first home-made tractor moved backward but now the whole countryside is teeming with our tractors. The workers of Ragwon blazed a trail for the rock-drill industry of the country. Their products may have a defect, but it is like dust on a gem. Polish it, and it glitters.

This remark reminded the officials of what had happened in May that year.

At that time he was inspecting a mine in Musan. The officials of the mine said that they could not increase the output of iron ore because Ragwon-brand rock-drills were inefficient. They insisted that high-performance machines should be brought in from a foreign country.

Kim Jong Il said that rotary rock-drills and other equipment should be made domestically because importing them from abroad would be tantamount to pouring water into a bottomless jar. He assured that the Ragwon Machine Factory would provide the mine with rotary rock-drills on a regular basis.

Then he stressed that he would give the task of making high-performance rock-drills to the workers of Ragwon and they would successfully manufacture them.

Soon afterwards, the Ragwon Machine Factory eliminated the defects in the machines and improved their efficiency. But the officials at Musan, who had been coveting foreign-made equipment, felt skeptical about the home-made drills.

Kim Jong Il decided that, in order to demonstrate the performance of the domestic products, a competition should be held at the mine in Musan to compare the home-made rotary rock-drill to a foreign-made one.

Thus began the unusual competition. At the beginning, there was no big difference in performance, but as the days went by, the difference grew bigger and bigger until the result became clear near the end of the competition. The drill that took the first place in the several days' competition was the machine made at Ragwon.

Kim Jong Il gazed at the parts of the drills as if recalling the competition, and said with a bright smile, **“I have heard that the recent competition proved that the allegation that Ragwon-made rock-drills were less efficient was completely baseless. Is it true?”**

An official said that the Ragwon-made machine had won and its efficiency was increased four to five times.

Then the General said in a loud voice:

Now you see that in a “wrestling match” between a team relying on itself and a team depending on others, the former, the “self-reliant” team, won. The winner is the “self-reliant” team!

After another big laugh, he resumed that the competition would probably have taught the officials at Musan a serious lesson.

He continued:

We must believe in the workers of Ragwon. We must believe in them and their rock-drills.

He stressed that in the difficult period after the war the Party had believed in the workers of Ragwon and he could see no reason why it should not believe in them now. Then he instructed the officials in his company that they must cancel the plan of purchasing foreign-made rock-drills.

Patting the factory official on the shoulder, he said: **You must carry forward the tradition of self-reliance.**

Profits

February 20, 1988 was a happy day for the general manageress of the Tianming Trading Corporation from Macao, China; it was

the opening day of the Kyonghung Shop to be run by her company's branch in the DPRK.

Early in the morning she came to the shop and looked round the counters to see if there was anything necessary for improvement.

To her surprise she was told that Kim Jong Il would soon arrive at the shop as he was making the rounds of the shops in Pyongyang.

As he entered the shop, she greeted him with delight.

“Oh, it’s you, general manageress,” called the visitor, congratulating her for the opening of the shop.

Then he looked round the counters of the shop and inquired in detail about its management.

Stressing that the shop should be spruced up and sell a wide variety of goods, he said to the officials:

“In the future the profits that this shop will gain through joint operation with the general manageress of the Macao Tianming Trading Corporation will be diverted to improving the living standards of Pyongyang citizens.”

An old acquaintance of Kim Jong Il’s, the Chinese entrepreneur was well aware of how warm his affection for the people was.

She was again impressed by his benevolent care for them.

Reiterating that the purpose of earning forex was to improve the people’s standard of living, he said: If the Kyonghung Shop earns a lot of money, the joint venture restaurant to be built on Kwangbok Street can be operated in such a way that guests pay in local currency. In the future I will have half of the profits from the shop spent for importing materials to produce consumer goods and the other half invested in the restaurant on Kwangbok Street so that the people can pay for the dishes in local currency.

It had been agreed that the restaurant to be constructed soon would import seasoning and all other materials from Macao and serve Chinese dishes, asking customers to pay in foreign currency so as to increase the profits. So it would benefit only a

limited number of people including foreigners.

Seeing through this business strategy, Kim Jong Il advised that it should receive local currency for the convenience of ordinary citizens.

The Chinese entrepreneur could not help having some apprehensions about this instruction.

The materials to be imported from Macao were expensive, whereas food was relatively cheap in the DPRK. Prices were set by the state, so it was forbidden to raise them at will. That's why the restaurant could reap no profit if it was to receive local currency from customers.

Kim Jong Il resumed:

“As the joint venture restaurant to be built on Kwangbok Street is to receive Korean currency, it may be called a zero-profit business. Profit should not be expected from it.”

The Chinese entrepreneur was afraid that the restaurant might go bankrupt if it would gain no profit.

Unaffected by her worried look, Kim Jong Il resumed: It is not good to make the people pay for the dishes in foreign currency. Last year I had flour imported to enrich the diet of Pyongyang citizens. It was distributed among restaurants to make bread and noodles, and they sold them to customers without receiving vouchers. The people were very happy about it. We should do everything with the people at the centre of our consideration and for the benefit of their interests.

Then he reassured her that her company would receive its share of profit, whether the restaurant was lucrative or not.

She was immersed in thought for a while and came to realize that the only criterion for his thinking and action was the interests of his people and he never cared about any financial loss the state would suffer if it were for their good.

Before saying goodbye to her, he assured that she must contact him if she had any troubles.

Seeing him off, she felt her heart overflowing with admiration for his great humanity.

Birthday Spreads

On April 2, 1989 Kim Jong Il was inquiring about the preparations for the 13th World Festival of Youth and Students. He told officials concerned that they should receive foreign delegates with cordial hospitality and pay close concern to the accommodation of the guests.

To their surprise, he went on:

“Among the delegates there may be some who will greet their birthdays during the festival, and the Central Preparatory Committee of the Festival should make necessary arrangements for this.”

Then he spoke in detail about what needed to be done to ensure that the foreign guests could celebrate their birthdays in a meaningful way during the festival.

He continued: The birthday spreads for them must not look similar to one another. Attention should be directed to such minute details as their national customs and dietary habits, particularly their characteristic features and favourite foods. Gifts should be prepared and photograph taking planned for, so that they can recall their happy days in the country.

This was how the preparatory committee was tasked with another important job.

According to a calculation made by the reception officials, the foreigners who would greet their birthdays during the festival numbered more than 300, among the tens of thousands of people from over 100 countries.

Every one of them was given on his or her birthday a feast that was suited to the national customs and dietary habits.

At first the foreigners looked in wonder at the tables and, after being told about them, expressed their heartfelt gratitude for Kim Jong Il's benevolent care.

By the River

The Host in Embarrassment. On May 15, 1989 Kim Jong Il was inspecting a county in North Hwanghae Province. Around lunch time he and his entourage came near a pumping station by a river. The chief secretary of the county Party committee, who was accompanying him, was very happy because he had decided to serve a good meal to the General on behalf of its residents during his on-site guidance trip.

He told him about it and urged him to come down to the village where the meal had been prepared.

The General said that they should have the meal there by the river, lest they should cause any trouble to the villagers who were busy with rice-transplanting.

The official dug his toes in, saying that it was inconvenient to eat lunch by the river.

Kim Jong Il, with a beaming smile on his face, told him that the foods would taste fine if they ate them by the river, adding that he had some prepared that morning before leaving Pyongyang. He continued that although the foods were not enough they should share them.

The official was embarrassed as he was being entertained by the visitor to his county.

A frugal meal was spread out on a nearby lawn.

The official was overwhelmed with both delight and awkwardness.

Kim Jong Il pulled the man by the hand and seated him next to himself. Saying that he was sorry for serving him with such a frugal meal, he plied him with the foods.

Rumbling of a Water Pump. After a while Kim Jong Il said that their lunch had a special taste. Then looking around, he said, **“Well, I can hear something like a rumbling water pump.”**

All listened attentively to the intermittent sound of the running machine.

The official explained, “I think the farmers at the pumping station, which we have just passed, have finished the assembling of a new pump and are running it to irrigate the fields before rice-transplanting.”

The General frowned, **“Perhaps they haven’t had lunch as they are working until now.”**

He went on that he felt sorry for the farmers who were working hard without having lunch, adding that if they could not be brought there to eat with him as they were working at the pump, it would be good to send some of their foods to them. Then he divided them himself.

He resumed: I once met an officer of the People’s Army who had advanced as far as the Raktong River with his unit during the war. On their ten-odd-day retreat they had endured all sorts of difficulties, partly for lack of food. I asked him whom he had longed for most in the trying period, and he replied that he had thought first of his senior who used to ply him with food. As he said, it is natural that when he is hungry a man thinks first of the people who gave him food and then of his parents. It is hard, indeed, to endure hunger...

He urged the official to take the foods to the workers, saying that he, the chief secretary, must go because the farmers in his county did not have lunch.

As the official was about to leave with the foods, he said:

“Don’t tell them that I am sending these foods to them. They may think that it is not right and proper to eat the foods, so you must not tell about me.”

Excellent People. The official found two men working at the pumping station, without having a meal as Kim Jong Il anticipated. The farmers were very surprised to see the official holding the foods in hand.

“I am sorry for being late. Here is your lunch. Please take it,” said the official.

The farmers vowed that they would fulfil their daily plan as the chief secretary brought them the lunch in person.

After washing their grease-stained hands they sat down on the floor and began taking the food.

“I was not thoughtful as a Party official,” the chief secretary said to himself, deeply touched by the General’s noble humanity.

The old farmer, still relishing the food, thanked him.

Feeling that he must tell the truth, the official said, “No, you must not thank me. This food was sent to you by our dear leader Kim Jong Il.”

Now the farmers were overwhelmed with amazement and gratitude. They asked the official to convey to the General their wishes for his good health, saying that they would keep the plates as a family heirloom and remain faithful to him from generation to generation.

The official returned to where Kim Jong Il was waiting.

The latter asked, **“Did you see the farmers eat the food?”**

After listening to what the official had to say, the General said, **“You say that the farmers at the pumping station, learning that I sent the food to them, asked you to convey their wishes for my good health and said that they would hand the plates down to posterity as a family heirloom. Our people are excellent, indeed.”**

He paused for a moment, looking towards the pumping station, and resumed: In the future we must do more for the benefit of people. We have a lot to do. It is my ideal to provide them with better food and clothes so that they will live a happy life. To make

them better off, our officials should always serve them faithfully. We should always take care of them with maternal affection and make tireless efforts to give them more benefits. We should be aware that the people may be hungry, when we are full, and they may be shivering in the cold, when we are in a warm room. This is the way to become loyal servants of the people.

Relief Funds

In January 1995 a devastating earthquake cut a swathe through the region from Osaka to Kobe, Japan, inflicting heavy human and material losses on the compatriots of Chongryon (General Association of Korean Residents in Japan-Tr.).

Though bereft of their relatives and property overnight, they pooled their efforts to pull through the natural calamity. The message of sympathy sent by Kim Jong Il infused them with vigour and courage. Their soaring morale was the envy of the Koreans who were affiliated with the pro-south Korean Federation of Korean Residents in Japan and other Koreans who did not belong to any organizations. Sadly, they had nobody to turn to in adversity. They were yearning for a saviour.

To their amazement, however, the relief funds sent from the DPRK were distributed equally among all the Korean victims, irrespective of their organizational affiliation.

The officials of Chongryon explained who was helping them:

On January 22, some days after he sent the message of sympathy, Kim Jong Il summoned officials concerned and told them about the critical situation in the affected region.

He said:

“We should not remain onlookers to the misfortune and sorrow of the officials of Chongryon and other compatriots living abroad.

“You should consider measures for sending relief funds to the compatriots of Chongryon who have sustained damage by the recent earthquake.”

“You mean relief funds?” exclaimed an official.

“Yes, I mean relief funds,” asserted the General.

The officials had presumed that they no longer needed to pay concern to the victims because Chongryon, inspired by his message of sympathy, was pushing forward a campaign to encourage its organizations to help the victims on the principle of filling one another’s needs. As the country was facing great economic difficulties, none of them had ever thought about relief funds.

According to Kim Jong Il’s instructions, they worked out measures for sending a certain amount of money. But he asserted that they must not spare anything because the money would help relieve the Korean compatriots of their misfortune and pain and that a large sum should be sent even though the people in the homeland had to eat gruel or go hungry. He underlined that the money should be distributed also among the Koreans who were affiliated with the pro-south Korean Federation of Korean Residents in Japan and other compatriots who did not belong to any organizations.

After listening to the Chongryon officials’ story, they all shed tears of gratitude. They felt shy as they had turned their backs on Chongryon because of differences in ideology and organizational affiliation. Moreover, they were well aware of the economic difficulties facing the DPRK.

They felt heartfelt admiration for the General who showed close concern for the compatriots of the homogeneous nation in disregard of their past. They keenly realized that blood is thicker than water.

Indeed, Kim Jong Il was a benevolent leader who devoted his all to relieving his compatriots of their sufferings and removing distrust and confrontation between them.

Photographic Images Carved on Tombstones

On April 28, 1998 Kim Jong Il visited a unit which had developed the technology of carving photographic images on stone and a carving machine by itself.

Taking a close look at the images inscribed by the machine, he was greatly satisfied with the technological success it had achieved.

He praised that image editing was done excellently with a computer, and advised that it would be better to raise the brightness of the images. Then he asked an official of the unit what they would do with the technology.

“We are planning to earn foreign currency by receiving orders from foreigners,” the official replied.

With a serious look the General gazed at the machine and images and said, **“The technology should be used to carve the photographic images of our fallen heroes and other martyrs on the tombstones.”**

He went on to say that the bereaved families would be pleased to see the photographic images on the tombstones. It is one of my long-cherished desires to inscribe the photographic images of our martyrs on the tombs in the Patriotic Martyrs Cemetery and I am very glad now that I can realize this desire, he said. Then he stressed that the carving work should be done on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the DPRK.

Later, he visited the cemetery and looked round the tombstones on which the photographic images of the martyrs were inscribed.

He said:

“Now more than 300 martyrs have been enshrined at the Patriotic Martyrs Cemetery. Supposing that every one of them has ten relatives, we will have more than 3 000 loyal people.

This is more significant than earning foreign currency by receiving orders for the carving of photographic images. One million or ten million dollars earned from such orders cannot be compared to the 3 000 people who are truly faithful to the Party.”

For a Bearing Assembler

On January 28, 2000 Kim Jong Il visited a bearing factory.

Looking round the shop floor, he stopped at a workbench where a woman was deftly distributing metal balls between the outer and inner races. An official of the factory told him that she had worked hard at this job for over a decade since she was a girl.

Kim Jong Il praised the assembler's dexterity and asked her how she could insert a fixed number of balls without seeing them.

The woman answered that she was a skilled worker.

The General said, **“Perhaps you may insert one more ball when you are missing your boyfriend.”**

All smiled at this joke.

The woman flushed scarlet as she had been married a year before.

Reading her thoughts, he resumed, **“Then you may put one more or one less when you are thinking of your husband or baby.”**

There was a burst of laughter.

The officials of the factory, however, were lost in thought. In fact the woman had a new-born baby and her husband was working far away from home. Although the couple had long been separated since their marriage, the officials thought that it was inevitable as the country was in a difficult situation.

One of them hesitated for a while and told the General about her family.

The latter nodded and said that the woman would have been concerned about her family while working, adding that she was praiseworthy as she was deftly distributing the metal balls without making a mistake.

Later, he told officials that she was sprightly despite her mental agony and adopted measures to ensure that her husband would take another job near her factory and the family live happily together.

A Baby Named Hu Hoe

Kubong Pass is a pass in the high, rugged mountains between Songgan County and Kanggye.

On August 31, 2000 Kim Jong Il met an old road worker and her family on the pass.

Some wearing a broad smile and others shedding tears of gratitude, the whole family recited poems and sang songs in front of him.

The General praised that they were better than a chorus and said:

You say that there are ten members in your family workteam. It is not easy to spend a lifetime in such an out-of-the-way region. Since there are a lot of patriots like you who put the interests of the country before their own, our Party is powerful and our country is prosperous. Your spiritual world is noble and beautiful, indeed.

Then he commended the family members for devoting their all to the country and people and encouraged them to keep their occupation generation after generation.

They vowed that they would do as he said, adding that it was their earnest wish that he should not walk on rough roads any more.

The General thanked them and said:

...I will go anywhere in the country if I can travel on such a

road. This road is really excellent. I highly commend you for your patriotic devotion.

The old woman held his hand in hers and said in a tearful voice, “You had a hard time of it leading the Arduous March and forced march. I wish that from now on you take meals and have a sleep on time.”

The General thanked her again, saying that when all the people were well off, he could live in comfort and encouraging her family members to do more for the benefit of the country and people.

An unexpected thing happened when he was posing for a photograph with them.

After adjusting the focus, the cameraman could not press the shutter release since the third daughter of the old woman, standing beside the General with a sleeping baby in her arms, was shaking the baby to wake it up.

Thinking that a smiling baby rather than a sleeping one would make a better picture, he waited, winking at the mother.

But the baby was wrapped in a sweet sleep, refusing to wake even when the mother impatiently pinched its cheek.

The General watched them with a gentle smile and dissuaded the mother.

He said, **“When grown up, your child will see the photograph and regret having fallen into a deep sleep.”**

This gave rise to a burst of laughter, and the cameraman pressed the shutter release.

People called the baby Hu Hoe (Regret–Tr.) from then on.

“Price” of Docents

At dawn on May 23, 2001 Kim Jong Il arrived at the Sinhung Area Revolutionary Battle Site in South Hamgyong Province after a night-long drive.

He gave field guidance at the revolutionary battle sites in Mts Paegyok, Ongnyon and Koda, crossing the rugged Pujonryong Mountains.

The following happened when he visited the Ongnyonsan Secret Camp. He looked round the slogan-bearing trees on the opposite side of the mysterious Tol River. As he was crossing a wooden bridge over the river, he asked an official of the province how far it was from the secret camp to the township of Pujon County.

The official answered approximately 14 km.

The General asked again if the docents commuted to the secret camp on a daily basis.

The official replied that the girls were living together in a house nearby.

“So do they have to live here?” said Kim Jong Il with a troubled look.

The girl guiding him said, “Don’t worry, General. We have lived here all the year round, looking forward to seeing you.”

Kim Jong Il regarded her thoughtfully and said to himself, **“If these girls live in the mountain as they do now, I am afraid that it will be difficult for them to get married.”**

He asked his guide how often she would go home in a year.

The girl answered once a month.

“If you go home once a month, you will hardly find time for dating,” said the General.

After a pause, he resumed, **“You need to descend the mountain and mingle with boys to choose your boyfriend. But as you ought to live on at this battle site, you will see no other boys than those who are touring it.”**

All smiled genially at this joke.

That day he underlined the need to give prominence to the docents who were living and working in out-of-the-way mountains to defend the Party’s revolutionary traditions and pay closer

concern to their marriage and other relevant matters.

The news spread quickly, boys vying for the girls and the parents taking pains to protect their daughters.

Once worried about their marriage, the parents were now raising the “price” of their daughters who were under the warm care of Kim Jong Il.

Meritorious Docent

On August 26, 2001 Kim Jong Il visited the Ryongpho Revolutionary Site. At this site there is a building where in April 50 years before Kim Il Sung had met the officers and men of the Korean People’s Army to arouse them to fight perseveringly to win victory in the war.

Kim Jong Il listened attentively to the docent’s lecture and asked about her age, college and family.

She was 40. After graduating from Wonsan Teachers Training College, she had worked as a docent at a revolutionary museum in the province. Later, she had volunteered to work at this revolutionary site in a remote mountainous region. Then she married a man who, after his military service on Height 1211, was working at the Ryongpho Cooperative Farm. She became a mother of two children but, during the Arduous March and forced march, adopted 14 orphans. Now some of them were serving the army and some others were working faithfully at their jobs.

Listening to all that the docent and officials had to say, Kim Jong Il looked at her with a gratified smile and said: Today this docent gave me a good lecture. It was truthful and succinct. She has worked at the Ryongpho Revolutionary Site for 20 years since she was a girl. It is quite a long period. You say that she brought up 14 orphans during the Arduous March, some serving the army and some others working at the revolutionary site. She is laudable indeed.

Then, pulling her to his side, he said, **“As a memento of your good lecture I will pose for a photo with you in front of this building of historic significance.”**

One month later, recollecting the docent, he said: It is not easy to bring up so many children while working as a docent at the revolutionary site. She is a meritorious woman equipped with the revolutionary soldier spirit. Looking round the revolutionary site, I asked the excellent woman to pose for a photo with me, and she said she wished that I pose with other docents as well. This shows that she is a laudable woman who cares more about her colleagues than about herself.

Children’s Friend

It happened on December 20, 2001 when Kim Jong Il visited the Kanggye Chicken’s Giblets Soup Restaurant. After looking round the restaurant he stepped out of it. He halted in front of the building and looked at the Youth Park nearby.

“Dear General, the ostrich that you had sent some months ago is now in the park,” said a senior official of the province.

Kim Jong Il asked with a beaming face whether people liked it.

“Yes, it is loved by everyone, children in particular,” answered the official.

“Children?”

“Yes, some children in neighbouring counties miles away come all the way to see the giant bird. At night some others like disturbing the sleeping animal to see it scurry about in the aviary.”

“Is that so? I am glad to hear that children like it.”

“Perhaps the bird, too, likes children.”

“The ostrich likes children?”

“Well, children run here and there shouting out and the giant bird runs playfully after them. The keepers at the park complain

that these naughty children give it no time for relaxation.”

The General laughed, picturing them in his mind.

He said: It was right that I had the ostrich sent to Kanggye. I did not imagine that the children would be so happy with it. I had it sent simply because I wanted to show the rare animal to the children in the mountainous region. To hear that they like it so much, I will not be tired today even if I stay up all night.

Saying this, he was smiling so happily, the leader who would spare nothing for the sake of children.

“Flower-Embroidered Cushion”

The following happened on the Day of the Sun (April 15, President Kim Il Sung’s birthday–Tr.) in 2003 when Kim Jong Il visited the Hamhung Plastic Commodities Factory for Honoured Disabled Soldiers.

He was greeted by the officials of the factory and said, **“Today it is the Day of the Sun, the greatest national holiday, but I have come to the factory to see the honoured disabled soldiers.”**

Then he made the rounds of the factory.

At the synthesizing shop he asked one of the officials what was the source of power for the factory. Learning that it was using an anthracite-fired boiler, he inquired about its capacity.

After a moment’s thought he advised that in his opinion the factory should not use the boiler because operating it would require much effort and the disabled soldiers had to work in squalid conditions.

He said, **“This factory is run by honoured disabled soldiers, so it should introduce an electric-oil heater, not the anthracite-fired boiler, so that they can work in a more cultured environment.”**

In fact, the management and employees of the factory did not think that the boiler caused them inconvenience.

They presumed that the equipment was quite good and so much effort was needed to produce steam. The problem was that inadequate supply of the coal would hinder production to some extent.

Kim Jong Il was more concerned about the disabled soldiers' health and working conditions than production.

Later, he ensured that an electric boiler, which was easier to install and use than the oil heater, was sent to the factory.

That evening, back from the factory, he sat at the table for dinner. Though it was very late, he did not feel like eating anything as he was still worried about the disabled soldiers.

He had already instructed officials concerned, after leaving the factory, to send beef and chicken for the holiday, saying that he was sorry the disabled soldiers did not enjoy it because he was visiting their factory.

Seeing his face clouded with anxiety, the officials wondered why. They supposed that he was thinking of the man without an arm he had seen at the factory during the day.

At last he said silently to the officials that he was still anxious about the disabled soldiers, adding that they should send some more as they deserved to be seated on "flower-embroidered cushion."

He suggested making a list of the gifts for them—colour TV, underwear, dinner sets, etc. Then he asked the officials if there was anything more they could send them.

"Overcoats, sir. But it is warm now and....," trailed off one of them.

The General said that the disabled soldiers might not feel as warm as other people and, moreover, they would wear the overcoats the following winter. He added the article to the list and then supplemented it even four times.

The following day the gifts were sent to the factory.

Request Accepted

On July 3, 2003 Kim Jong Il visited a power station under construction on the Jangja River.

Learning about the construction project, he was satisfied that another smart power station was being built in Kanggye, Jagang Province.

He said, **“Looking round the construction site of the power station, I can see that great progress has been made in the project. Building work is being done excellently. The members of the youth shock brigade and other builders have achieved a lot.”**

An official of the provincial Party committee gave him a detailed account of the power stations that had already been built, were being built and would be built, as well as their names.

Studying their locations on the panoramic map, the General said: It would be better to attach numbers to the names of the power stations that are being built in tiers below the Hungju Youth Power Station. The names *Uijin Power Station* and *Hanam Power Station* are confusing. They should be named Hungju Power Station No. 1 and Hungju Power Station No. 2, and the numbers should indicate the order in which they will be completed.

The officials were very delighted at this idea, repeating the names to themselves. The names were both simple and easy to remember.

Unexpectedly, an official of the youth league committee of the province said to the General, “Previously, you renamed Hungju Power Station Hungju Youth Power Station. Would you please name the Uijin Power Station after youth?”

At this somewhat childish request Kim Jong Il gave a hearty laugh, joking that he must be afraid of “losing” the word *youth*. The officials joined the laughter.

Pleased with the young man's mettle and courage, the General accepted his request and said:

“The Hungju Youth Power Station was built first and, after completing this Uijin Power Station, it should be named Hungju Youth Power Station No. 2. The young people in the province are building this power station in the same spirit as they displayed in building the Hungju Youth Power Station during the Arduous March and forced march. So it is good to name it after youth.”

At Kanggye Winery

On May 30, 2007 Kim Jong Il visited the Kanggye Winery.

An official of the winery guided him first to the wine cellar and told him that they housed an assortment of liquor the factory had produced since 1958.

The General said: 1958 may be the year when President Kim Il Sung visited this factory for the first time. I remember the day when I was here with him. Nearly 50 years has passed by, and the large amount of liquor with a half-a-century-long history should be kept in good condition.

Suddenly he changed the subject: In old times Kanggye was famous for beauties, and there were many entertainment girls here. At that time people called the head of the province provincial governor, but now chief secretary of the provincial Party committee. The governor indulged himself with entertainment girls, and the chief secretary may abandon himself to drinking, feeling reluctant to relinquish his position because of this treasure trove.

This joke raised a big laugh.

The official of the factory lost no time in trying to speak in defence of the chief secretary, saying that he was teetotal.

Nodding, the General laughed louder.

Then the official guided him around the production lines.

He said, “Dear General, our factory produces hundreds of tons of wine on every major holiday and supplies it in a planned way to the workers of the machine factories in the province and the citizens in Kanggye. They are all happy with it.”

And the senior official of the provincial Party committee added that the workers were provided with liquor, chicken and eggs, and they pledged to live up to the General’s affection.

Kim Jong Il said with a gleam of amusement:

“We must spare nothing for the sake of the workers at the machine factories. I am so sorry for not supplying anything more to them. I am very glad to hear that the workers at the Kanggye Winery turn out a large amount of vintage wine and send it to the machine factories on a regular basis. I am satisfied with this.”

Learning that all the equipment in the supplemented production lines were manufactured in the province, he said: It is laudable that the factory has boosted production by introducing modern equipment that were made in the province. Through a vigorous mass campaign for technological innovation it has upgraded its equipment and established a production system fed by locally-available raw materials. Thus it has ensured cost-effectiveness in business operation. This experience proves that science and technology is the key to increased production.

A Monk in Support of Socialism

On May 24, 2008 Kim Jong Il visited the Ryonghung Temple halfway up Mt Paegun, whose name was derived from the white clouds shrouding the high mountain.

He said to a monk at the temple, **“I have come all the way here as I have heard that the relics at the Ryonghung Temple have been preserved in their original state.”**

Then he went on to say: The temple is a cultural property that showcases our ancestors' excellent architecture and superb artistic talent. It was not damaged during the Fatherland Liberation War, probably because the enemy did not bombard this area to protect a host of his remnants and spies who were in hiding around here. Kim Tok Gun, the prototype of the hero of the feature film *The Unforgettable Man*, fought in this mountainous area.

Looking round the temple, the General showed particular concern for the antiques and praised them for their authenticity—the verse couplets engraved on the four pillars of the Taeung Hall, the image of Buddha made of wood and painted in living colours, the genuine sculptures of mythical animals in the shape of monkeys and pictures hanging on the walls, the painted brackets of the lower walls, the plate of the Taeung Hall, the large wooden vessel for rice cake and bath tub made of willow, etc.

The monk was happy to see the General's broad smile and began to explain the writing inscribed in small letters on the "plate bearing the records of the reconstructed incense-burning hall of the Songbul Temple in Mt Paegun in Hamhung."

Once upon a time the Taeung Hall had been burned down for unknown reason. A squire sent a 13-year-old carpenter to reconstruct the hall. The reconstruction work was done in 49 days. The monks, including their head, did not want to pay the boy. They drove the boy away and decided to put the finishing touches to the building by themselves. However, it was not so easy as they presumed, and they re-invited the boy and apologized for their behaviour.

The carpenter worked hard to complete the building but he did not wedge one of the four pillars that supported the ceiling. Consequently, the ceiling remains tilting slightly.

Kim Jong Il listened in silence to the monk's explanation.

The monk, pointing to the sculpture of a crab on the back wall of the Unha Pavilion that stood on the opposite side of the Taeung

Hall, said, "Such a sculpture cannot be found elsewhere. If a stone is fastened on the back of a crab, the creature will naturally hold it up to the death. In my opinion it was believed that the crab sculpture would support the Unha Pavilion for ever."

Nodding in agreement the General said: In ascertaining antiques, people tend to conjecture about them. When a historical site or relic is unearthed, data concerning it are not readily available and contemporary people cannot be found. So conjecture is a preferred way of interpreting it. But we should believe in the legends that have been transmitted historically.

Surveying the Taeung Hall again, he asked on which side the building reconstructed by the young carpenter tilted.

The monk was surprised because he presumed that Kim Jong Il was not listening carefully when he was explaining the above plate.

"On the back side, sir. Over there," he replied.

The General moved towards where he was pointing. He studied the pillar, which was said to have been set up by the carpenter.

He said to the officials:

"Historical relics are precious cultural assets of the country. So it is important to keep them in a good state of maintenance and conduct effective education by means of them as they are permeated with the resourcefulness and talent of our people. We should work efficiently to properly sustain the features of the nation's excellent cultural heritage, so as to implant greater pride and dignity of the Korean nation in our people."

After touring the Ryonghung Temple, he got into the car and left for the newly-built Paegunsan Pleasure Ground.

Passing through the pine and pine-nut trees standing upright in the area of the scenic spot, he said that the tall, upright trees presented a scene of extraordinary beauty.

When he arrived at a pavilion in a dense forest, a senior official of the county Party committee explained that it doubled as a dance hall.

Kim Jong Il told the woman official that the pavilion was excellent, praising that it blended well with the landscape although the topographical conditions were not favourable.

Then he saw a TV in it and said smilingly that the power line had reached the spot.

Though everything was in short supply, the county had ensured that the power line be laid as far as the pavilion 16km away from the township, so that the holidaymakers could enjoy themselves in the scenic spot.

The General asked the official if there was a TV at the Ryonghung Temple.

She said apologetically that the temple was not supplied with electricity and she would soon ensure that the monk could watch TV, at least by installing a battery.

Saying that he would send Arirang TV, the General stressed:

“You should ensure that the monk at the Ryonghung Temple can watch TV. Then he will be a man who supports socialism, not the one who dilutes it.”

A Farmer from Pyongyang

On July 9, 2008 Kim Jong Il gave field guidance at the Unhung Cooperative Farm in Thaecheon County.

Inquiring about the crop yields on the Handure Plain that had been realigned, he was told about a farmer, called Om Jong Sil, who hailed from Pyongyang: Eight years before, she learned that the General had visited the plain that was being realigned in the dead of winter. She decided to leave her home in the capital city and work as a farmer on the plain. Her father’s support was a great encouragement to the girl.

Seeing her face tanned and hands calloused from hard work under the sun, the General praised her for having volunteered to

work at the farm, far away from Pyongyang, after his former on-site guidance in the Handure Plain.

An official said that she was a model farmer who was playing a big role in motivating her sub-workteam to perform feats of labour in the Songun era.

With a satisfied look the General said to the officials in his company: Whereas young people in foreign countries are trying to obtain the citizenship of the capital city, those in our country willingly leave their beloved capital and volunteer to work at farms and coal mines and for the reclamation projects. This is a true feature of our young people who are boundlessly loyal to the Party and the revolution.

He continued, **“In the 1960s Ri Sin Ja was known country-wide as a model motivational worker, and Om Jong Sil should follow in her footsteps.”**

That day, before leaving the farm, he summoned her again and said: You say that your parents supported your decision to volunteer to work as a farmer at the Unhung Cooperative Farm, stressing that you must work hard to increase the production of cereals with unshakeable loyalty to the Party. They are laudable. You should write a letter to tell them what I have said to you today.

Soon the farmer wrote to her parents in Pyongyang and she became widely known as a model motivational worker in the Songun era.

Ennobling Personality

On February 28, 2009 Kim Jong Il visited the Manpho Spinning Mill. He was smiling broadly, looking round the shop floor and the dormitory that were kept spick and span.

In the period of the Arduous March and forced march they transformed the compound of the mill, including the building,

in a modern fashion by relying on their own efforts.

Girls were working hard at the gleaming machines. They were orphans and now they were trained as skilled workers, who were taking a considerable share in carrying out the production plan. And the mill made quilts with the by-products from the wool spinning process and sold them to newly-weds.

The General commented that such a nice factory could not be found elsewhere in the country, adding with a hearty laugh that it seemed smart enough to be passed in the assessment for the title of the Thrice-Honoured Three-Revolution Red Flag.

He was not only happy about the production volume and cultured practice on the shop floor. He found greater pleasure in seeing the manageress of the mill who had worked with devotion for the benefit of the people without much publicity.

In the past, when everything was in short supply, she took maternal care of 23 orphans even though she was responsible for the management of the mill.

Kim Jong Il was told that the girls, who bowed to him with tearing eyes when he was looking round the mill, were those who had been brought up by the manageress.

In the dormitory he saw the kitchen utensils and quilts she had obtained for the girls' marriage, as well as a photograph of her helping them with their study, which was hanging on the wall of a room.

Then he said: Today, looking round the mill, I am more pleased to learn about the beautiful traits of the manageress. Her deeds are laudable and patriotic. It is not easy for a factory manageress to raise dozens of orphans. Only a determined woman can do so. The manageress of this mill deserves to be called a genuine patriot. She prioritizes the interests of society and the collective, the Party and revolution, over her own, and is determined to devote her whole being to them. Her sense of revolutionary moral obligation is admirable. She is indeed a woman of ennobling personality. She is

a flower representative of our era, who has devoted herself unreservedly to the future of the country with noble humane affection.

He went on to say:

“The Songun era is the one of great achievements which produces a large contingent of such laudable people as this manageress.”

He stressed: The might of the service personnel and people united on the collectivist principle of **“One for all and all for one!”** is invincible and we have nothing to be afraid of as long as we are supported by this great unity.

Woman of Merits

On December 9, 2009 Kim Jong Il visited the Kanggye Knitwear Factory in Jagang Province.

He made the rounds of the factory and went into the dormitory.

An official of the province said to him, “This is a room where forty-four orphans live, all looked after by the management of this factory.”

“Forty-four orphans?” exclaimed the General.

The manageress guided him to the daily-necessities store, where rigid plastic bowls and plates, staple and subsidiary foodstuffs were heaped up.

Kim Jong Il, as well as the officials accompanying him, were pleased to see them. Then they followed him into the kitchen of the canteen, where they saw rice boiled with kidney beans for lunch.

He said that it looked palatable, joking that he was feeling like eating it up for his lunch. He recalled with deep emotion that during his on-site guidance trip to the province President Kim Il Sung had instructed that kidney beans should be cultivated on an extensive scale as they were highly nutritious and tasty.

Seeing a board bearing a list of birthdays hanging on the wall of the canteen, he said that the workers would be pleased when they were given a feast on their birthdays.

He also read the menu for the week and observed that it was Wednesday and the rice boiled with kidney beans was prepared according to the menu.

The manageress said to him, "Today it is the birthday of a worker who lives at the dormitory. She is a blessed worker as you have visited our factory on her birthday."

"Is that so? I am happy, too," said the General.

He went on towards a room in which there were the racks of *chima* and *jogori*. He said that they looked fine and the girls must be ironing the clothes there. The quilts and blankets piled up against the wall delighted his eyes. He said that the quilts and blankets in PVC package and with tags indicating the owners' workteam numbers and names must have been prepared for the girls' marriage, like those he had seen at the Manpho Spinning Mill.

An official explained, "You are right. The parentless workers would feel sorrow on their wedding days, and the management of the factory has prepared them so that they can be fully aware of the advantages of our socialist system."

Kim Jong Il commented:

"The manageress of this factory is commendable. You say that at a difficult time when everything was in short supply, the officials of the factory took parental care of many orphans and trained them into meritorious workers. They have done a laudable thing."

Pointing at her, he went on to say: This manageress is a revolutionary. She is an excellent patriot. I am glad to find another patriot in Kanggye like Ju Pok Sun in Manpho. Compared to a film, the manageress Ju Pok Sun of the Manpho Spinning Mill is the heroine of Part 1 and Kang Song Hwa of the Kanggye Knitwear Factory, the heroine of Part 2.

She said with deep gratitude that she had worked to relieve him of his burdens.

He was told that the manageress had been born in Jagang Province, and said that the women in the province were tender-hearted and assiduous, so they had worked hard to achieve many laudable things.

Smart Factory

On July 29, 2010 Kim Jong Il gave on-site guidance at a factory in Kanggye, Jagang Province, the one which he had visited seven years before.

In front of a horizontal hydraulic press, an official of the factory said: This is the machine you saw during your previous visit. It was manually controlled at that time, but now it has been upgraded into a CNC machine. As a result, workers have been freed from hard, backbreaking labour. Workpieces are processed with a single keystroke, and production efficiency has jumped 2.5 times.

The General asked, **“Is the press working now?”**

The official replied yes.

A senior official of the provincial Party committee added that the factory had completed the technological upgrading by itself.

Satisfied, Kim Jong Il looked at other modern presses with control panels.

“Excellent!” he exclaimed.

Then he stopped before a CNC rolling machine, which was capable of regulating the thickness of a workpiece by computer.

“Now it is a smart factory,” he exclaimed again.

He stepped into the general control room and studied a computer screen—monitoring the different models of presses, regulating the thickness of the rolls and providing ready access to daily production results.

The official of the factory explained that thanks to the CNC machines two workers were performing the job of seven and the processing time reduced to 35 minutes from six hours.

The General asked how many hours in a row they could run.

The official answered an average of 16 hours a day, compared to eight hours for the old machines.

Kim Jong Il appreciated the workers' modernization efforts and, surveying the shop floor, asked, **"Are all these many things CNC machines?"**

"Yes. They are CNC machines connected through an integrated manufacturing system."

"Well done. Now you no longer need to do paperwork for summing up the results of a day's work," said the General, beaming at the officials of the factory.

They said that they had set a high goal for the introduction of CNC technology, pledging that whatever the cost, they would modernize other processes while maintaining regular production.

"I know you are as good as your words," he said confidently.

He continued to praise them unstintingly for their factory's splendid appearance and efficient presses.

They said that they had encouraged the workers, through effective political work, to introduce CNC technology, telling them that they must do so to bring happiness to the General as he would not visit the factories that were lagging behind in the CNC drive.

He thanked them all and appreciated their strenuous efforts again.

With a contented smile he declared, **"Kanggye is a model!"**

2. ON THE LONG JOURNEY OF SONGUN-BASED LEADERSHIP

Hunting at Night

The following happened on January 5, 1975.

On this cold winter day Kim Jong Il visited an island-defending unit of the KPA. For long hours he inquired in detail about the living conditions for the service personnel, combat readiness and even education of the children on the island.

As the night grew late, his entourage became nervous.

Walking in deep thought for a while, he told the officials that he could not leave this out-of-the-way island without doing anything for the soldiers and he would be relieved if he could give something to them. Then he proposed hunting wild animals there.

The officials were dumbfounded by this offer, as it was already pitch dark and they were ignorant of the island's geography.

They advised that he should have a rest, saying that they would go and hunt animals.

He thanked them and said: You should understand my feelings. Upon seeing us, the soldiers here asked if President Kim Il Sung is in good health and told me not to worry about their posts on the front line. It is a great encouragement to me. I myself must do something for them.

He continued to say:

I want to hunt some wild animals and send them to the soldiers who are reliably defending the frontline posts of the country.

The hunting ended well past midnight.

The officials urged him to go back to his lodging and have a rest. But he counted the game and divided them up to give an equal share to each one of the soldiers on the island and the sailors of his vessel. He had the game loaded into his car and carried to the wharf.

Now feeling at ease, he left the island.

Outstanding Marksmanship

On January 13, 1975 Kim Jong Il visited a firing range to test the performance of new sniper rifles.

He reached the platform and ordered that instead of the fixed target, ten light bulbs be hung on a branch of the pine tree beside it.

The tree was 100m away from the platform, a distance in which the caps of the bulbs could be dimly seen, much less the glass tubes.

The shots rang out, shattering all the bulbs one after another.

“Good, this rifle is passed,” the General said to the officials.

Then he had penicillin bottles fetched. The bottles were put on a shelf 50m away from the platform, but he ordered them to be put 100m away. They were much smaller than the light bulbs. They were hardly visible, even with the help of the rifle’s special sights.

He began firing again. The shots rattled through the clear air. Through binoculars the officials saw the ten tiny bottles vanishing in a minute.

Next, ten pop bottles were put on the shelf and, even after the firing of the last tenth bullet, they all remained upright on it.

The officials hurried quickly towards it, only to see the ten bottles without their tops.

“Our workers are laudable, indeed. They have great skills.”

The General praised the manufacturers, the officials looking admiringly at the outstanding marksman.

Harmless Cigarettes

The career of the anti-Japanese war veteran Kim Il is replete with anecdotes, many of them showcasing Kim Jong Il's ennobling sense of moral obligation to his revolutionary forerunners.

The following happened after he began working as First Vice-President of the DPRK in April 1976.

In the lounge of a building where an important meeting was about to begin, the General was having a talk with the old veteran. Studying his fingers carefully, he asked his aide how many cigarettes he smoked a day.

The reply was a great surprise to him.

In fact, Kim Il was widely known as a heavy smoker.

President Kim Il Sung once joked that during the anti-Japanese armed struggle the light of Kim Il's cigarette had been flickering even when the campfire had died out at the secret camp, adding that if many cigarette butts had been unearthed at the site of a bivouac, it meant that Kim Il's regiment had spent the night there.

Now the veteran became an inveterate smoker. It seemed impossible to wean him from this bad habit, an addiction resulting from his life-long, indefatigable exertions.

But the General could not tolerate it.

He gave the aide a severe telling-off: Smoking is impairing his health but you have not done anything against it. You are the very man who must control his smoking. His doctor and family members cannot do so because he is away from them most of the time. You are failing to do what you ought to do. This means that you are derelict in your duty. You should have cared more about his health. I will punish you. You deserve a severe punishment.

The aide stood still, filled with remorse, and Kim Il was more nervous.

Upon coming back from the meeting, he took out the cigarette pack, pipe and matchbox from his pockets.

His decision to quit smoking could not last long. He felt ill at ease all the time, fumbling in his empty pockets, opening the drawers, toing and froing in his room, and even begging the visitors for cigarettes. This caused great inconvenience in his life.

One day his aide came in with a matchbox and cigarettes.

"Please take these things," he said with an amused smile.

"What? Are you teasing me?"

"No, sir. These cigarettes will cause no harm to you."

Kim Il gaped in wonder at his aide.

The latter explained: After reproaching him, the General was anxious about the veteran's health. He said that Kim Il had supported the President through thick and thin over the long period of the revolutionary struggle, noting that it would be difficult for him to relinquish his long-standing habit. Then he tasked officials concerned with obtaining harmless cigarettes for him.

60-Year-Old "Bridegroom"

"I liked O Jin U as much as the President had liked Kim Chaek."

This is what Kim Jong Il said in remembrance of the anti-Japanese war veteran.

O Jin U died of sickness on February 25, 1995.

That day, mourning the deceased for long hours, Kim Jong Il said: Nothing is more heartrending than to see revolutionaries of the older generation departing this world one after another. Even though they cannot work any longer, we find a great encouragement in them as long as they live. I feel heartbroken when they pass away. To our Party, such a senior revolutionary cadre as O Jin U was more precious

than most. Indeed, his death is a great loss to our Party and revolution.

O Jin U, the then minister of the People's Armed Forces, was Kim Il Sung's and Kim Jong Il's closest comrade.

The following happened on his 60th birthday.

Kim Jong Il gave him a call saying that he must come quickly for an important meeting.

The old minister hurried along and walked into a room where he could see several anti-Japanese war veterans.

Kim Jong Il appeared from the adjourning room, saying that it was time to guide the bridegroom to the table as he arrived.

All looked in confusion at one another, as there was no young man in the room.

He opened the door and urged the veterans in their sixties to enter the room, stressing that the ceremony was about to begin.

Thinking that he was in a deadpan humour to please his old comrades as he used to be, O Jin U stepped inside.

To his surprise, however, a wedding spread caught his eyes as he entered the small room.

Kim Jong Il declared solemnly:

This frugal spread is for the 60th birthday of the minister of the People's Armed Forces, a revolutionary forerunner who has traversed the long journey of the revolution unwaveringly in support of the great leader.

...

As this birthday spread has been modelled on a "wedding spread," I will be the best man.

O Jin U stood overwhelmed with gratitude.

Kim Jong Il filled a cup of wine for him and proposed a toast to his health.

With the mood growing congenial, he asked the "bridegroom" to tell about his wedding on this happy day.

Amid a burst of applause the old veteran stood up and began to tell a story.

Immediately after the country's liberation he was appointed as the secretary of the Party Committee of Anju County. One day he met a beautiful and good-natured girl but her parents did not like him because he was an orphan. He went to her house and said to them, "I am the chief of this county and you must know that the land and factories in it are all mine. I am governing the county according to General Kim Il Sung's order. You know an old story about Pongi Kim Sondal who sold off the Taedong River. And to me, a man of the General, governing Anju is a cakewalk. As a guerrilla, I accomplished much more difficult tasks." Then he stood up to leave and the father, who was sitting cross-legged with an air of importance, dissuaded him and asked, "Are you really a man of General Kim Il Sung who employs the art of shortening distance? Then you must have wings under your arms. When do you spread them?"

When O Jin U said this with a poker face, all split their sides with laughter.

Kim Jong Il said, **"After all, you came to marry a girl you liked thanks to General Kim Il Sung."**

The old man resumed: On his wedding day, as he was sitting politely behind the table one of the naughty boys threw a paper roll towards him. It read, "You are a thief. You have come in full daylight to steal a girl in this village. You must choose between the wedding spread and the girl." Seeing through this attempt at testing his courage, the bridegroom scribbled something on the paper and threw it back. The old man with a grey beard, who was presiding at the ceremony, read it with a smile and roared, "Get out, naughty boys. You shall pay for this. The stick on the paper means he can beat ten rivals at one blow, and the three Xs and one dot mean he can defeat more than 30. Below these symbols he has written that he is a soldier of the General. This means that he has mastered the art of shortening distance." Overawed, the young boys took to their heels.

As the story-telling was over, all clapped their hands. Kim Jong Il, too, laughed heartily, saying that the minister was knowledgeable and adroit.

He continued to tell O Jin U: Some days ago, the President instructed that a spread should be prepared for your 60th birthday. I told him that I would have his birthday spread modelled on a wedding spread, out of my wish that the minister retains a mind of vigour although he is growing old. The President was quite delighted at this idea.

He told an official that the spread should be sent to the minister's house for his wife to see, so that they could pose for a photo as they had done on their wedding day.

Feast and Corn Porridge

On August 28, 1995 Kim Jong Il was standing with a smile on the deck of a military vessel pitching gently on the sea.

The soldiers of a company were conducting a swimming drill in the atmosphere of an actual warfare.

Seeing them, the General said, **“The soldiers are good swimmers.”**

He said to the officers of the KPA: Everyone in our country must learn to swim as it is sea girt on three sides. To our soldiers, swimming is a key training item. All units should prepare their soldiers to be a-match-for-a-hundred combatants who are good at shooting, marching and swimming.

After the drill was over, he met the soldiers on the deck. Saying that he had lunch prepared for them as they acquired high swimming skills in a short period by intensifying training with indomitable will and unyielding perseverance, he led them into the dining cabin.

On the table was quite a feast including various dishes and fruits.

Kim Jong Il asked the soldiers, smilingly, if they could eat them all.

They answered they would.

He resumed:

You should eat them up.

Today I have another engagement, so I am not having lunch with you. However, you should think that you are sharing it with me. It will be good to have lunch in the fresh wind on the boundless sea.

He told the officers accompanying him that they should have lunch with the soldiers there, and left after seeing them eating the food.

On his inspection trip to the front line he had his lunch—a bowl of corn porridge.

To the officials in embarrassment, he said that to think that the soldiers were relishing the food, he felt full even without having the lunch.

Two Soldiers from Kophung County

On March 20, 1996 Kim Jong Il reached Chol Pass on the way back from his inspection trip to the army units on the eastern sector of the front line.

It was one spring day over 30 years previously that President Kim Il Sung had met a soldier on guard duty there while on an inspection trip to army units and posed for a photograph with him.

Kim Jong Il looked back on the unforgettable day when he was accompanying the President.

Looking down at the meandering paths he remembered that there had been a sentry post there at that time. He asked if it was still around there and said that he wanted to meet a soldier on guard duty, if any.

A general ran towards the sentry post. As it was quite a long way from where they were standing, it took over 20 minutes to fetch the soldier. The sun had already dipped behind the hills and the cold wind was hissing and raging.

In spite of the cold Kim Jong Il cooled his heels on the ridge.

The soldier in full kit saluted Kim Jong Il.

The latter asked, **“What is your name?”**

Then he inquired in detail about his birthplace and parents.

The soldier answered affably that he hailed from Kophung County in Jagang Province.

After a long talk with him, Kim Jong Il posed for a photograph with him.

Before parting from the Supreme Commander, the soldier asked him to send the photograph to him as soon as possible.

Kim Jong Il agreed, saying with a laugh that he was quite amusing.

It was found out later that the soldier, whom the President had met on this pass three decades before, also hailed from Kophung County.

From then on the out-of-the-way place in Jagang Province has been well known to the people all over the country, along with Chol Pass that is symbolic of the Songun revolution.

A Boxing Match Suspended

It was April 25, 1996, the founding anniversary of the KPA.

In the morning Kim Jong Il was planning an inspection trip to an army unit on the front line. He told the officials that in order to celebrate the anniversary with the service personnel they should prepare some food and have an art troupe accompany them.

At the news of a visit by the Supreme Commander and the renowned Korean People’s Army Merited Chorus (the then name), the service personnel rejoiced.

Upon arriving at the unit, Kim Jong Il warmly congratulated them on the anniversary and enquired about their schedule for the day.

They had arranged sports competitions, a boxing match in particular, because they thought that it would demonstrate the unit's combat efficiency and the soldiers' courage.

Kim Jong Il sat together with the officers of the unit to watch the match.

Amid loud cheers two robust, agile soldiers made a fierce fight in the ring, pushing and grappling with each other.

The match reached its height, when Kim Jong Il said quietly to an officer of the unit, **“That is enough. Go and tell them to stop the match.”**

Dumbfounded by this order, the officer rose up hesitantly.

Kim Jong Il explained: I am afraid that the soldiers might be exhausted. They should relax themselves on this holiday and I do not want to see their bleeding, swollen faces. Boxing is no fun on a holiday.

According to his instructions, the boxing match stopped and recreational games began.

On a Running Train

On June 3, 1996 Kim Jong Il was on a train to inspect units of the KPA.

Interesting Film. While specifying ways to enhance the combat efficiency of the army, he brought up the subject of TV sets and video recorders that had been supplied to battalions.

A political officer said that according to the plans drawn up by the battalion political instructors, companies and the subunits under

the direct control of battalions were taking turns to watch new films and having meetings to emulate the heroes of those films.

Kim Jong Il asked him whether the soldiers liked watching videos.

“They like them very much,” answered the officer.

“I am glad to hear that the soldiers like watching videos,” said the General.

He continued to ask if they liked ordinary films or those with war themes.

The officer replied that they preferred the latter.

The General nodded, saying that as soldiers who would fight the enemy, they should prefer military songs and the films and novels on war themes.

He stressed that prompt arrangements should be made to reproduce copies of *17 Moments of Spring*, a film of the former Soviet Union, and distribute the videotapes among the army units.

He went on to say:

“As I have said before, you should not show the soldiers such multi-part films as the Soviet film *17 Moments of Spring*, all at a time. After showing them one part, you should wait until the soldiers feel eager for the next part. Then the film will be more interesting.”

This advice was implying that officers should know the psyche of their soldiers and organize their cultural and aesthetic life accordingly.

Cards. Kim Jong Il changed the subject, saying, **“The officers who do not know how to play cards cannot become intimate with their soldiers.”**

Then he asked an official how many rules he knew for card games.

The official answered that he did not know all but some favoured by the soldiers. He began to explain them, particularly *honssol* in the *Myongryong* game.

After a while the General interjected that *honssol* might be *honssal*, meaning embarrassment. When playing this game, there would be nobody who had not been embarrassed by the opponent's trick.

All gave an amused laugh at this witty comparison.

Then he asked how many months the cards could last.

He underlined the need to supply better-quality cards to the soldiers, saying that they could not last long because they would easily crease and wear thin as the official said.

He continued, **“The General Political Bureau should ensure that the old packs of cards used by the soldiers are sent to me. Those packs should have tags denoting how many months they have been used.”**

He stressed that he would examine them and take measures to improve their quality.

Later, he went over the packs in his office and took appropriate steps to supply better-quality cards to the soldiers.

Blessed with Soldiers

On December 1, 1996 Kim Jong Il visited the Seoul Ryu Kyong Su Guards 105th Tank Division of the Korean People's Army to inspect the tank men's training.

He climbed up to an observation post and surveyed the drilling ground where snow was flurryng.

An officer of the division, pointing to the heated stones scattered across the floor of the observation post, said that they had been brought by the soldiers.

Greatly moved, the General looked closely at them and praised the soldiers.

The drill began.

The more time passed, the more the storm was raging.

It was freezing in the observation post.

The officers of the division and others accompanying Kim Jong Il asked him to stand on the stones and warm himself.

Throughout the drill, however, he stood on the frozen floor.

Many years later, he saw a performance given by an art group of the division, particularly the reciting of a poem titled *The Great Songun Road*, written on the theme of the above heated stones. He told officials that while seeing the performance, he recollected his inspection of the tank men's drill at the division during the Arduous March.

He continued to say: That day it was very cold. I felt as if my feet were frozen. The soldiers brought the heated stones to the observation post so that I could warm myself. Seeing the soldiers training in the biting cold, I could not step onto those heated stones. The moment I saw the stones brought by my laudable soldiers, I felt warm in my heart and tears gathered in my eyes.

Then he went on:

“There are no soldiers in the world as excellent as mine. I am blessed with my soldiers.”

Teacher Who Was Taught

On January 1, 1997 Kim Jong Il visited Mangyongdae Revolutionary School.

The teacher, who was assigned to guide him at the room for education by means of revolutionary relics, was determined to perform her task with credit.

The General stopped in front of a picture.

The teacher began to explain, “This is a picture of President Kim Il Sung delivering a speech at the inauguration ceremony of the school.”

Kim Jong Il said that the picture reminded him of the day, and continued: That evening he came back home and told my mother that while giving a speech at the inauguration ceremony of the school, he looked closely at the bereaved children and thought of his revolutionary comrades who had fallen in the mountains. Noting that he could hardly keep back his tears, he said we should become their parents and take good care of them. My mother said that she stood all along dropping her head as she was also crying at the sight of the children. She vowed that she would be their mother. I cannot forget what my parents talked.

The teacher was struck dumb with surprise because she knew nothing about it.

Looking more closely at the picture, the General told her that the bespectacled man sitting in the front row was the first headmaster of the school and he had accompanied An Jung Gun into Manchuria to kill Ito Hirobumi.

The guide who was supposed to explain to Kim Jong Il was absorbed by his explanation.

He resumed:

The President said that if a father with his own child became the headmaster, he might not love the bereaved children as much and, seeing the child call his father, they would envy him missing their parents. So he appointed the childless man as the headmaster.

He then saw a picture of the President being among the children.

The guide felt quite sure about it.

Surprisingly, however, Kim Jong Il, pointing at the several children in the picture, spoke about their parents and even an official of the school whose face was half-veiled by that of another man.

The woman marvelled at his unusual memory. It was dozens of years ago and the General was only five at that time.

She stood still, looking in admiration at him.

Mobilization Order

By an order for the mobilization of the KPA all its units were immediately deployed over the vast expanse of the lowlands ranging from North Phyongan to South Hwanghae provinces.

People looked wide-eyed at the fully-armed service personnel who were moving in trucks or walking on foot day and night.

The US and south Korean armies, which had been keeping watchful eyes on the movement of the KPA units, were put on the alert.

Their fear dissipated only some days later, when they realized that those units were staying at cooperative farms, not in combat positions.

Then how did this happen?

On April 4, 1997 Kim Jong Il said to the commanding officers: The Korean People's Army is a revolutionary army for the people that shares weal and woe with them. To perform its duty with credit, it should pay due concern to assisting farmers in their work. This year its units should not go to the nearby farms as they did previously, but move as far as the lowlands and stay there for three or four months to help the farmers there, so that they will render a tangible contribution to producing cereals.

Then he went on to say:

The service personnel, by learning from the spirit and mettle displayed by the soldier-builders who performed heroic exploits in building the Anbyon Youth Power Station, shouting the slogan of loyalty *Let us not see the blue sky over the country before carrying out the Supreme Commander's orders*, should work hard to help the farmers and thus contribute a large share to boosting the country's output of cereals.

Water, Not Fish

On September 15, 1997 Kim Jong Il inspected an island-defending unit of the KPA.

The wind was hissing and raging as he went up to the forward observation post and set out tasks for stepping up combat preparations, improving the unit's combat efficiency and intensifying training.

Then he asked an officer of the unit how many fishing vessels they had.

After listening to his reply, he asked again:

What species of fish are usually caught?

The officer answered, "Flatfish and, mostly, sandfish."

The General said with a smile that it was important to net large quantities of fish, including flatfish, sand eel and sandfish, with the self-made lighters and serve the soldiers with them on a regular basis.

An official in his company said, "Supreme Commander, I think islanders are mostly thin because they eat fish very often."

His assertion sounded plausible, and other officials looked confused.

The General said:

I think it is not right to say that one gets thin after eating fish often. The service personnel who live on the island are mostly thin though they eat plenty of fish. Perhaps, this is because the water they drink is not good enough.

The officers of the unit were surprised at this remark.

One of them said, "Supreme Commander. Here the water is too hard, so the soldiers suffer from indigestion. That's why they lose weight although they eat more fish than those on land."

The General stressed that they should pay special concern to drinking water.

Worthy of Praise

The following happened on September 28, 1997, when Kim Jong Il was inspecting a unit of the KPA.

In the mess hall he noticed a board hanging on the wall.

It was titled “Day for the Soldiers.”

For a good while he studied with curiosity the title and the list below.

The commander of the unit began to explain: The officers of the unit pondered on ways of providing the soldiers with better living conditions. At last they agreed on a proposal to establish the “Day for the Soldiers.” According to it, all officers and their wives should take turns in preparing side dishes for the soldiers’ lunch from December to next March. For example, if it is the commander’s turn, he and his wife lay the table with the foods they have prepared for the soldiers, as their parents would do. The same is true of the political commissar and other officers. They and their wives obtain subsidiary foodstuffs before their turn comes round. Meanwhile, they have vied with one another in preparing better dishes. Day after day the soldiers are served with fine dishes as they were done by their own mothers, and have made redoubled efforts in the combat and political training to prove themselves worthy of the warm affection of the officers and their wives.

After listening to what the commander had to say, the General could understand why the above list contained the dates and the names of all the officers ranging from the commander to the sergeant majors and civilian employees, and their wives.

Nodding with a satisfied smile, he said. **“This is very good. You are doing a really good thing.”**

He continued that it was not easy that the officers’ wives were taking turns for several years in serving the soldiers with the dishes

they prepared for every lunch from December to next March.

He praised that they were excellent women who regarded the soldiers as their own flesh and blood and put the interests of the country above their own. Then he stressed that all other units and subunits of the army should follow suit and keep the “Day for the Soldiers.”

Later, he said:

“We can be proud before the world that the officers and their wives are keeping the ‘Day for the Soldiers.’ It is unimaginable that the officers and their wives in other countries would serve the rank and file with the delicious dishes they prepare at home.”

“Mysterious” Glasses

On the early morning of May 22, 1998 Kim Jong Il’s car was climbing to a unit of the KPA on Kkachi Peak more than 1 000m above sea level in the eastern sector of the front.

The soldiers were so excited to see their Supreme Commander on the frontline height, but the commander of the unit was more than nervous because he had to explain the situation in the area on the foggy day. It was in such a hazy fog that even the nearby hills were hardly visible.

He accompanied Kim Jong Il to the top of the height and briefed him on the enemy units’ deployment and their circumstances, pointing to some of the visible hills that were shrouded in clouds.

Kim Jong Il told him that he knew them all and continued: **“That is Sonjo Rock over there and those in front of it are Height 351 and Mt Wolbi.”**

The latter and other officials in his company were surprised that he was familiar with all the objects that were hardly visible and invisible in a dense fog.

Kim Jong Il knew the topography of the area south of the Military Demarcation Line inside out.

The commander of the unit wondered if he had already been there several times.

Kim Jong Il said, **“I can see everything because I am wearing glasses. With glasses on you can see them all, too.”**

The officials looked confusedly at him, who laughed out loud.

They realized that he came to master the geographical features of the front line as he had made painstaking efforts to get the army units fully prepared to defend the country and the people.

Incidental or Inevitable

In February 1963 Kim Jong Il, accompanying Kim Il Sung, visited the frontline heights in the western sector of the front and, several times later, inspected the army units there.

On February 7, 2001, 38 years after that, he came there.

That day he inspected a women's company.

The political instructor of the company was the daughter of a soldier whom Kim Il Sung had met on February 7, 38 years previously, while inspecting the above units.

While talking with the soldier who hailed from Changsong County Kim Il Sung had asked him his native place and age, as well as the share his family had received after the harvest before he joined the army. Years after being discharged, the man had his daughter serve in one of those units on the front line.

Kim Jong Il was very pleased to learn this fact and met the man's daughter.

Seeing the officer saluting him, he praised with a bright smile on his face that she was defending the frontline post in her father's place.

Then he continued to say to the officials accompanying him,

“How fortuitous it is that on this day, 38 years after the leader met the young soldier who hailed from Changsong, I have met his daughter.”

It was indeed a meaningful meeting.

Wondering if it was really an incidental happening, the officials said to themselves: Kim Il Sung traversed the road of Songun all his life, and now Kim Jong Il follows it. Serving the army to defend the country has become the tradition of every family, which is peculiar to Songun Korea. That’s why the meeting is not a mere chance but an inevitable outcome.

Advice on Logic of Life

On March 4, 2001 Kim Jong Il met a senior official of the State Merited Chorus to inquire about the old artistes in and out of their work.

Calling an old hornist’s name, he asked how he was getting along.

The man was a skilled musician and, although far over 60, was striving to sustain the peculiar tone of his instrument.

The General once called him a gifted artiste worthy of a world record.

The official said to him, “The man lost his wife last year and lives with his children. They complain that he has grown nervous at home as never before. They wonder why.”

Kim Jong Il laughed loud, and said reprovingly:

“You are not well versed in the logic of life.

“An old saying goes that a nervous widower and a sad widow make a new family.”

The official was confused at first and, after reflecting on it, realized what it meant.

The General resumed, **“Understanding his feelings, you should**

arrange his remarriage in a month and report back to me.”

“I see,” replied the official, blushing with embarrassment. Afterwards, the artiste was remarried.

Informed of the news, the General asked the official, **“Is he happy now?”**

“Yes. He is working with youthful vigour. He does not get nervous any longer.”

Kim Jong Il was pleased with the reply.

Four Packs of Cigarettes

On May 10, 2001 Kim Jong Il was inspecting an artillery unit of the KPA.

In the mess hall he looked carefully at a board hanging on the wall, on which was written a list of rations.

He said to himself, **“Ten cigarettes a day.”**

Then he asked the company commander, **“Does your company receive enough supplies of cigarettes?”**

“Yes.”

“Well, let me see your cigarettes.”

“I do not have them in my pockets.”

“Let me see the cigarettes for the soldiers. Bring me some packs.”

After a moment the commander brought four packs branded Paeksung.

Seeing the packs in different colours, the General said that they must not vary in colour as they were for the soldiers. Then he ordered an official in his company to send those packs to the General Political Bureau, so that it would investigate to find out the cause.

He said to the official: As we are taking these packs, the company may lack cigarettes. Instead of them, you must send

another four Paeksung-brand packs to this company. Cigarettes are supplied to companies according to the number of the soldiers, so if we take some with us, the soldiers will lack as much.

He added, **“No one must be allowed to take out supplies for the company at will. I, the Supreme Commander, cannot be an exception in this respect, either.”**

Some days later, the company received four packs.

Great Joy

The following happened on May 25, 2001, when Kim Jong Il was inspecting a company of the KPA.

Filled with Fragrance. Acacias were in full bloom in the compound of the company. The surrounding area was overgrown with plums and apricots.

The General said smilingly that it looked like a rabbit village in a cartoon, adding that the barracks was cozy and there were nests in the trees. Drawing a deep breath, he resumed:

What a fresh air. It is clean and filled with the fragrance of acacia blossoms. It is refreshing, indeed.

Then he called the company commander.

“Commander!”

“Here, sir”

“You live in a better house than mine. My house is not better than this. I mean it.”

All burst out laughing.

The bleat of goats was heard, as if they were calling the visitors.

“There is a shed over there. Let’s go and see it,” said the General.

As he was turning towards it, an officer asked him to see the mess hall first.

But the General insisted, **“No, I will go to the shed first. It sounds as if those animals are calling me.”**

At the shed he inquired about the number of animals and the output of goat milk. A yellow puppy that was sleeping under the eaves woke up and wagged its tail, as if welcoming him.

He said with a beaming face, **“Here is a yellow dog.”**

Then he went on towards the mess hall and saw a variety of foodstuffs on the worktop.

“This is far better than an international hotel. Wonderful.”

Pointing to an oven, he said that its lid was so gleaming.

He stressed that if other companies conducted effective ideological work, kept the barracks in a good state of maintenance and improved the standard of living in the same way as this company did, the soldiers would grow attached to their companies and be faithful to military service, as the lyrics of a song ran *The company is my home, it is my dear home.*

Commendation. The General noticed the watchwords, including *Bravery* and *Fortitude*, affixed to the pillars in the barracks.

“What are those?” he asked.

“They represent the ten rules for combat and virtues advanced by President Kim Il Sung.”

He saw a box fastened on top of the pillar and asked, **“Then what is that?”**

“The box contains the board and pieces for Korean chess, sticks for *yut* game and playing cards.”

“That’s good. What is that below it?”

“That is a mat on which the soldiers sit when playing cards or other games.”

“You have everything in a complete set.”

Noting that the nests in the trees made by the soldiers were a manifestation of their patriotism, he praised them for building cozy

homes for birds and sprucing up the bedroom of the company.

An officer of the company said to him, "The company owes its smart appearance to Jo Kyong Gu, who was its political instructor before being transferred to another unit some time ago."

"Jo Kyong Gu?! Jo Kyong Gu... the name rings a bell."

"His past is rather chequered. When he was a soldier at this company, he was discharged in disgrace because he committed an error."

"What was the error?"

"He was so impetuous that he violated rules in dealing with civilians."

"Was he discharged for that reason?"

"Yes, sir."

The officer continued to say: After being discharged, Jo went back to his native home and worked at a farm. He made up his mind to rejoin the army and rectify his error. He went to the construction site where his company was seconded, and worked with devotion. Everyone was sympathizing with the man but nobody thought of rehabilitating him. Later he rejoined the army according to Kim Jong Il's instructions.

After listening to the officer's story, the General said, **"Well, his name was familiar to me. So he achieved a lot as the political instructor of this company."**

Then he continued that he had inspected many army units but had not witnessed such a meticulous lifestyle.

"We should raise Jo Kyong Gu to prominence. He deserves high commendation. What kind of commendation is suitable for him?"

"Some time ago we submitted a proposal of giving him commendation but it was shelved because of his erroneous past."

"We must give him commendation. High commendation!"

Kim Jong Il resumed: He is a man to be reckoned with. The political instructor is laudable indeed. He is highly esteemed by all.

Such an officer who lives in the memory of the people is a good man.

Later the title of Labour Hero was conferred on the officer and a feature film produced about him.

Emergency Call. Kim Jong Il gazed at the picturesque barracks and the surrounding area and said, **“Emergency, this is an emergency.”**

Everyone was surprised at this abrupt order.

He resumed that all the officers of the KPA including those of the units of arms and services must visit this company that had been laid out in an excellent fashion and learn from its example.

“Yes. We will arrange the visit later.”

Kim Jong Il said with a poker face:

This is my order. Issue an emergency call quickly. This is not a call to cope with any contingent event or any critical situation. It is a call to generalize a good thing, a positive example.

Now the officials realized his intention and told him that they would immediately call all the commanders.

He went on to say:

Probably, this will be an emergency call unprecedented in the history of army building. A few days’ delay in aiding farmers does not matter. They must see this. Call all of them... Order them to stop what they are doing. They must come immediately before acacia blossoms fade and fall.

By this order the officers of the units of arms and services, those on the front line and others who had been aiding farmers were all called to this company.

They were told on the spot why they were summoned abruptly.

Making the rounds of the company they got a good impression and felt remorseful for their poor performance.

They made a fresh decision to follow suit.

“Tell Me Frankly”

On June 25, 2001, Kim Jong Il inspected a unit of the KPA.

After seeing the women soldiers under training, he called them.

He asked them their names, native places and stature.

Saying that they were robust but looked short, he asked one of them:

“When did you join the army?”

“In Pyongyang in the spring of 1998.”

“As you joined the army in 1998, you lived at home in 1996 and 1997 when rice was most lacking.”

“Yes.”

“Didn’t you suffer from a lack of rice?”

The soldier dropped her head, not responding.

“Have you skipped meals at home?”

“No. I have not skipped...”

“You hail from Pyongyang, so I think you got along quite all right. But Pyongyang citizens, too, suffered a lot from a shortage of food during the Arduous March. At that time everyone endured hunger to defend socialism.”

The General paused for a while, as if he was recollecting the days of the Arduous March when the people made painstaking efforts to defend socialism in the face of the imperialists’ moves to suffocate the country and blockade it economically.

Then he asked another soldier standing nearby.

“When did you join the army?”

“In April 1998.”

“As you joined the army in 1998, you, too, have experienced hardships during the Arduous March.”

“Yes.”

“Have you ever skipped meals at home?”

"No. I ..."

"Well, how many meals have you skipped for a lack of rice?

"Tell me frankly."

"I have not skipped meals and I usually ate gruel."

"You ate gruel. Where did you get rice?"

"My mother... at a market," the girl began crying.

"Well. Don't cry," the General soothed her.

Collecting himself, he turned round and said to the officials:

"I don't believe that children in provinces have not skipped meals.

"Perhaps, these girls are saying that they have not skipped meals because they do not want to worry me. As you know, all the people in the country lived on gruel mixed with vegetables at that time."

The girls were sobbing.

One of them said to him, calming down, "At that time you suffered more than us. We all know that you led the Arduous March to victory, eating gruel as the people did. We will not forget it for ever."

He regarded the soldier with teary eyes and asked again, **"Have you skipped a meal after joining the army?"**

"No."

"What about now? Are you good?"

"We are really happy now. Under your close concern we are serving the army without feeling hunger or cold.

"We only wish you good health."

"Thank you."

He clapped her on the shoulder and said to the officials.

"As we underwent the Arduous March, children in the growing period were poorly fed, so these girls are not tall enough. It breaks my heart to recollect those days."

The officials were choked with emotion, and he said to the officers of the unit:

“You should understand my intention well and take good care of the soldiers’ living with parental affection.

“Our soldiers are true revolutionaries who, far away from their native homes and parents, are devoting their dreamful youth at the posts of national defence whether they are recognized or not.

“Taking good care of the soldiers’ living is the officials’ intrinsic duty and moral obligation.

“As I stress time and again, the officers should always remember that their men may feel cold and hungry, when they feel warm and full. They should take good care of their men’s living.”

Exceptional Report

The following happened on March 1, 2002, when Kim Jong Il visited a women’s company of the KPA.

That day he had talks with the triplets who were serving as soldiers of the company.

With a kind smile he asked them their names.

“I am Yun Hwang Ok.”

“I am Yun Kum Ok.”

“I am Yun San Ok.”

He said smilingly that when the second letters of the names were put together, it was Hwang Kum San (Gold mountain–Tr.), adding that the names were meaningful.

The triplets hailed from a mountain village in Yangdok County, South Phyongan Province, where Kim Il Sung had opened up a new history of “Gold mountains” after the country’s liberation. They were so named by their parents, who wished to hand down the legendary tale to posterity.

Kim Jong Il grasped the meaning of their names immediately

and asked them when they had joined the army and what their parents were.

Then he said, **“You were born at the Pyongyang Maternity Hospital, weren’t you?”**

They said yes.

“Did you receive gold rings?” he asked.

They replied they did. They felt gratitude to him for having airplanes dispatched to carry women who were pregnant with triplets, had tonics and gold rings sent to female triplets and silver daggers to male triplets as a token of their birth.

Kim Jong Il said that the parents would be very pleased to see their children grown up into stout soldiers, adding that they might have difficulties serving the army but he was sure they would overcome them.

Then he asked how tall their parents were and whom they resembled.

The eldest of the triplets said, “My second sister resembles mother and my third sister, father. And I am a hybrid of them.”

He laughed heartily and said, **“These triplets are still young and their parents are tall. So they will grow taller.”**

Then he ordered the officers to report to him how tall they grew year by year.

They, as well as the girls, were moved to tears.

Later, data about the triplets’ growth were regularly reported to the Supreme Headquarters.

Penalty Remitted

Asking Three Times. On December 18, 2002 Kim Jong Il was inspecting a unit of the KPA.

Seeing the soldiers under training he noticed that it was physically demanding.

He made the rounds of the barracks and mess hall, and then asked an officer of a subunit what was in short supply.

Told that everything was sufficient, he asked the commander of the unit what was most lacking.

The latter answered, "Thanks to your close concern, everything is supplied in sufficient amounts."

Still worried, the General said:

"I do not believe that you have no difficulty.

"I know you are telling me so because you do not want to worry me. Please tell me all your troubles without hesitation."

As he was asking the same question three times without moving ahead, the commander confessed that they lacked meat because they were not so successful in sideline farming.

The General said: Today I saw the soldiers under intensive training. They should eat meat regularly. After the training they will not feel content with a whole duck each. I will have meat supplied to your unit.

He asked the commander which was better, duck or chicken.

"Duck," replied the officer.

The General agreed, saying that duck was both nutritious and delicious.

He assured the commander that he would make sure that the soldiers were served with meat, as he had requested.

An Official Comes Back. That day Kim Jong Il wound up his inspection and left the unit.

The day was short as it was the 11th lunar month, but the officers and men of the unit talked about his visit long into the night.

They heard a car horn blowing in front of the headquarters.

Running outside, the officers were all surprised to see one of the senior officials who had left the unit with the General hours ago.

He explained to them why he came back.

The General said to his entourage: Today, while inspecting the unit, I was most pleased to see that the officers have worked with great passion without being depressed after they had been punished for their fault. I was afraid they might be crestfallen and less positive. But they have achieved a lot in making preparations for combat and managing their unit.

An official told him that although they had been subjected to a penalty for their own mistake, they were greatly encouraged by his visit, adding that they deemed it a great honour.

The General was speechless for a while and reproved the officials: The officers of the unit have been subjected to the penalty until now. You should have proposed remitting the penalty when you were informed of their good performance. Tomorrow I will have many gifts, including meat and other foodstuffs, sent to the unit. But I am afraid the officers might be awkward to receive them.

He resumed:

“As they have been subjected to the penalty, they will feel ill at ease when they are sitting with his men to eat delicious meat soup.”

The officials could not say any more.

After a pause he told them that as New Year's Day was drawing nearer, they should ensure the officers could enjoy the holiday with their families in ease and comfort.

Then he ordered solemnly: Remit the penalty that was imposed on the officers as they have set an example in perfecting preparations for combat and managing the unit. And restore their ranks.

He told an official that although the latter would be away from him, he should immediately go back to the unit and convey to them what he said and restore their ranks.

The official vowed that he would do as he ordered.

This was how he returned to the unit.

A Scene Not Photographed

On January 23, 2003 Kim Jong Il's car arrived at the forward command post of a KPA unit on the front line.

It was still before daybreak and the blizzards were howling.

The officers of the unit ran in a hurry to greet him, but they were surprised to see him unaccompanied by his entourage.

It was quite exceptional.

Hours ago, after burning the midnight oil in his office, he called an official and told him to prepare for an inspection trip to the front line.

The official made prompt preparations for it but had no time to inform the cameramen. He grew anxious as he was well aware of how important the inspection trip was in the history of his revolutionary activities.

The General read his mind and said that he must hurry up as the soldiers on the front line were waiting for him.

He told the official to ensure that the officials concerned and cameramen would come after him.

The officers of the frontline unit could hardly conceal their surprise.

The General told them that his entourage would arrive later and he would first look round the command post.

He led the way and, on top of the height, surveyed the defence lines extending on a vast area.

He was briefed on the situation by the commander of the unit and inquired in detail about the local topography and deployment of forces.

After long hours he climbed down the height to meet the soldiers.

By then the officials concerned and cameramen arrived.

They looked so sorry for being late. They requested him to climb up again.

A smile surfaced on his face, and he said that they must be feeling regret about not taking a photograph.

He continued, **“The soldiers are waiting. Let us all pose for a photograph with them.”**

Regrettably, a page of the history of his Songun-based leadership was not recorded.

Thank the General

In the aftermath of the Arduous March and forced march the country was running short of electric power.

The same was true of a rural village on the west coast.

One night the whole village was lit up. The residents learned that a windpower station built by a nearby KPA unit was supplying electricity to their village. They were deeply grateful to the service personnel.

The following was how this happened.

On February 3, 2004 Kim Jong Il inspected the unit.

He climbed up a rugged hill behind the headquarters to see the windpower station built by the soldiers.

The turbines lining up on the ridge at intervals of dozens of metres blended well with the landscape; its huge wings were quite a spectacle.

“The wind turbines are colossal. It is wonderful.”

He was all smiles, seeing the giants spinning round and round. Then he asked where the electric power from the turbines was supplied.

“It is supplied to the headquarters of the unit, companies directly attached to it and houses of the officers at the headquarters and civilian employees. Lighting and heating at the companies are powered by electricity,” said an officer.

The General was satisfied that the companies were benefiting from the electric heating system.

Then he was lost in thought, surveying the village at the foot of a nearby mountain.

After a while, he asked to the officials, **“How is electricity supplied to the farmers’ houses over there?”**

They could not give him a reply.

He understood their feelings and resumed: You should ensure that the electricity from the wind turbines is supplied also to the farmers’ houses in the surrounding area. The farmers live across a road at the other side of the village for the headquarters’ officers. At night the latter will be lit up but not the former. You should have considered what an impression this stark contrast would make on the civilians.

He said to the officers:

“You should tell the residents that this time you have built a windpower station and its output of electric power is not so large. If you say that you are going to share it with them though it is not sufficient, they will be pleased and thank the service personnel for it, praising that it is indeed an army for our people. And this tale will go down to posterity like a legend.”

The officers felt remorse for not having paid due concern to the people.

This was how electricity was supplied to the farmers’ village.

When they were thanked by the farmers, the soldiers told them about their Supreme Commander’s close concern, saying that they must thank the General.

“Three-Point Commander”

On November 27, 2007 Kim Jong Il was inspecting a KPA unit.

At the soldiers’ hall he closely studied the history board hanging in the corridor.

Pointing at the photograph of the commander, a political officer of the unit reminded him that a decade ago when he was inspecting a military university, he was a cadet and made a three-point shot at a basketball match.

The General recollected the day with a gleam of amusement.

... That day the university arranged a basketball game between Songsae and Pangphae teams. From the very beginning the game was fiercer than ever before as it was watched by the Supreme Commander.

Five seconds after the start of the game the Songsae team scored a point and the players grew more excited.

When a cadet of the Pangphae team took possession of the ball, the General shouted, **“Three-point shot, three-point shot.”**

However, the player was standing too far away from the basket and he had not succeeded in a three-point shot at such a long distance.

He collected himself and threw the ball with all his might.

Astonishingly, the shot was a success.

“Well done. Good,” exclaimed the General, clapping his hands in delight. ...

Recalling the scene, he praised that the cadet had already become a commander.

After looking round the unit, he was satisfied that it was effective in ideological education, flight training, management and supply services.

Before leaving, he turned round to the officer and called, **“Three-point commander!”**

“Here!”

“You are not so old. You can still play basketball.”

“Yes.”

“I wish you good health and success in your work.”

Priority

It happened right after the project for renovating the Taedongmun Cinema was over.

The cinema was swarming with Pyongyang citizens who came early to buy tickets.

Unexpectedly, a column of soldiers in smart uniforms arrived in front of the cinema.

All wondered who they were.

On August 2, 2008 Kim Jong Il inquired about the operation of the cinema. Noting that watching a film at a cinema was great fun, he asked the officials of the WPK Central Committee who had been given priority as the demands for tickets were rapidly growing.

They answered that the audience included workers, officials and artistes in the city.

The General was disappointed at the reply because the soldiers who had taken charge of the renovation project were not among them.

With a reproachful look he underlined that after the completion of a new project those who carried it out must be the first to benefit from it.

Then he recounted what had happened in the 1970s.

... After the Pyongyang Subway was inaugurated, Kim Il Sung came to look round it. He asked the officials whether the soldier-builders had taken the trains.

The officials replied that they had not, and he said that they had a hard time of it laying the subway, so they should all take the trains. He ensured that they took them for a couple of days before opening the subway to the public....

Finishing his story, Kim Jong Il resumed: After the

inauguration ceremony of the Haeju-Hasong Railway it was the young builders in charge of the project who were the first to take the train. And at the inauguration ceremony of the northern railway the young people who laid it took the first train.

He went on to say:

It is natural, after something has been built, that those who carried out the project use it first, and this is a mode of people-oriented politics.

He noted that recently the officials were not paying due concern to this, adding that the soldiers who renovated the Taedongmun Cinema might not have watched a film at such a modern cinema, so arrangements should be made for them to enjoy it first.

He resumed that as it had 1 000 seats, the soldiers should take turns to go to the cinema, and a militant film should be selected and shown to them.

This was how the soldiers got priority in watching a film at the modern cinema.

3. EARNEST DEVOTION

Smiling Girl

On January 6, 1964 a girl in charge of sound recording at the Korean Film Studio was engrossed in her work.

Hearing somebody at the door, she turned her head.

A young man was stepping into the room.

She greeted the stranger with a slight bow.

“I am here to do recording for film music,” he said.

The girl said in a faltering voice that he should obtain an approval first.

“Yes, you are right. I must get an approval. I have almost made a serious mistake.”

“Well, according to discipline you must...”

“I understand. I have forgotten it.”

He comforted her and turned round to walk out, when the officials at the studio stepped in.

They had been informed of his visit belatedly.

He exchanged greetings with them and told them what had happened just before.

They looked at the girl with reproach.

Her face flushed red.

Kim Jong Il said in a gentle voice, **“Today I have almost made a serious mistake. I have forgotten it! If that girl had not reminded me of the discipline, both she and I would have breached it.”**

The officials, as well as the girl, laughed in a cheerful mood.

Admiration of a Technician

On January 5, 1967 Kim Jong Il was inspecting a poultry farm in Pyongyang.

As dusk fell, chickens were sleeping on the roost, paying little heed to the plentiful feed on the crib.

He asked why they had not taken it.

A technician of the farm said, "When it gets dark, they sit on the roost without taking the feed."

Kim Jong Il asked again:

Then why don't you turn on the lights at the coop?

The technician was perplexed.

Kim Jong Il explained: On summer nights farmers usually hang the lights under the eaves of their houses and make a smudge in the yard to keep off mosquitoes. All family members sit together, chatting and making a straw rope. Chickens roam about the brightly lit yard, taking the feed far into the night. If you take advantage of this habit, you can raise the fattening rate of chickens quickly.

Then he continued:

If you hang the lights at the coop at night and give chickens feed, they will not sit on the roost early in the evening but continue to take the feed. Then they will grow fast. This does not take much effort, so you can do so if you are a little concerned about it.

Later, the technician followed this advice, observing the fattening rate of chickens. He was glad to notice that the weight of a 63-day-old chicken increased by 0.6-0.8kg on average.

Stern Instructions

On August 4, 1975 an official was summoned by Kim Jong Il.

Upon entering his office, he was keyed up to see his angry face. Never before had he seen him in such a bad temper.

He asked reproachfully if it was true that people still sang a song about him at ceremonious events or meetings.

The official was dumb.

By that time songs in praise of him, including the *Song of Dear Comrade Kim Jong Il*, were composed, which were immensely popular among men and women, young and old.

At ceremonious events, for example, they sang a song dedicated to him of their own accord, as well as the *Song of General Kim Il Sung*.

Kim Jong Il summoned him because he had been informed about this.

He said:

“I instructed you to ensure that people sing only the *Song of General Kim Il Sung* at all ceremonious events and meetings, but they do not do so yet.

“You have deliberately ignored my instructions that officials must no longer allow a song about me to be sung at ceremonious events and the prime movers be punished. It is wrong that you interpreted my instructions at will and have not carried them out.”

Then he reiterated that such a song must never be allowed.

The official decided to tell him what was on his mind.

“Dear leader! How can I forbid people to sing the song as they do it from the bottom of their hearts? I cannot do so. Even if I did, they would never listen to me.”

“Stop it,” he shouted resolutely.

He stressed that people must not be allowed to sing a song about him, saying that his greatest wish was to ensure that the song dedicated to Kim Il Sung reverberated throughout the country.

“In the future you must ensure that people do not sing any song other than the *Song of General Kim Il Sung* at meetings

or ceremonious events. If you do not follow my instructions, I will have you dismissed from your post.”

With a stern look he ordered that he must take prompt measures to prevent the practice from being widespread, underlining that he must do what he instructed him to do if he would wage the revolution with him to the last.

The official walked out of the office and was heading for the street.

Students were marching past in fine array, singing aloud a song.

*Endowed with the valiant spirit of Paektu,
He is a guiding star that has risen in the sky over Korea.
Holding high the red flag of the revolution,
He adds shine to our land of Juche.
So dear to our hearts is the leader,
Our beloved Kim Jong Il of undying fame.*

...

The official stopped walking and thought to himself: How can I carry out his instructions as people sing the song with all their hearts?

Tito's Reverence

On April 13, 1976 a diplomatic official was reporting to Kim Jong Il on his recent visit to the then Yugoslavia.

They talked in an informal atmosphere.

The official said: I met President Tito, known for his strong sense of self-respect. He expressed his opinion on the international situation and the Korean question and then stressed that he admired the DPRK for its steadfast independence and revered President Kim Il Sung who was pursuing a firm independent policy.

Kim Jong Il said with a smile, **“The present is the era of**

independence. Many countries of the world are advancing along the road of independence. A country following big countries blindly would end up a colony of the modern type.”

“A colony of the modern type...” repeated the official.

Kim Jong Il resumed: Such a country is what we call a political servant. Those that live in the spirit of others and dance to their tune are all wretched political servants. As for our country that is sandwiched between big countries, adhering to independence is all the more important. Independence is the lifeblood of a country and nation. As President Kim Il Sung said earlier, neither the Russian clothes nor the American clothes fit us and only our Korean clothes fit us perfectly. Though our country is not big, it never gives in to the pressure of big countries, but implements its policies as it intends, with no regard to the feelings of big countries, and speaks out without hesitation what it wants to say. Therefore, it is quite natural that people all over the world cannot but admire our country. I am sure President Tito likes such an independent policy of ours.

The official said, “You are right, sir. Although he prides himself on being a pioneer of the non-aligned movement, Tito admires our country for its consistent stand of independence.”

Kim Jong Il resumed:

“I value the independence of the country and nation more than my life. If there is a man among our people who ignores independence, he is a traitor who negates the Juche idea. Maintaining independence is patriotism, pure and simple. Independence is the spiritual mainstay of the motherland of the Juche idea.”

The official said, “Even bourgeois politicians praise that the prototype of an independent statesman leads the DPRK.”

Kim Jong Il stressed, **“Independence constitutes the core of the great Juche idea. Independence—this is a guarantee for the dignity and prosperity of our nation and its reunification.”**

Mistakes

On June 7, 1983, while touring China, Kim Jong Il visited a canned food factory in Shanghai.

An official of the factory explained the process of sterilization to him.

Underlining the importance of sterilization at foodstuff factories, the General asked how they were sterilizing cans.

The Korean interpreter translated the reply. "Cans are sterilized at 120°C for eight minutes."

"120°C?"

The General looked dubious, saying, **"It must be 4°C or 5°C higher than that."**

The interpreter asked the Chinese official to confirm the temperature.

Then he said in an embarrassing tone, "I was wrong. He says it is 124°C."

He made a mistake because of the noisy machines.

Kim Jong Il nodded, and said that cans could be sterilized thoroughly at 124°C for eight minutes.

This reminded the accompanying officials of what happened some days ago when he was looking round a brewery in Qingdao.

That day he asked the manager what kind of antiseptic they were using on the inside of cans and whether beer tasted different in that case.

As he was confused by his expert questions, the manager answered that it had the same taste.

The General asked again if it was true.

The manager admitted his mistake, and said with an

awkward look, “Frankly speaking, the beer tastes a bit different. We are making effort to solve the problem.”

The General laughed merrily.

By the Hwangju Stream

On September 28, 1987 an official was informed that Kim Jong Il was heading for the Hwangju Stream in his county after a field guidance trip.

He made necessary preparations in a hurry and went out.

As he was waiting on the path to the stream, a car approached towards him and the General got off with a genial smile.

With arms akimbo he surveyed the stream flowing down between the green mountains.

He said, **“The Hwangju Stream is always limpid.”**

The official was smiling as he was looking forward to the day when the General could take a good rest after the fatigue of his ceaseless field guidance trips.

He showed him some nets and other fishing tackle.

The General said jokingly, **“As there is fishing tackle in plenty, there will not be enough fishes.”**

Then he asked the official if there were still plentiful carps in the stream.

The official said thoughtlessly, “Yes, sir.”

With a slow nod of his head the General resumed: Frankly speaking, a large carp farm was newly built in Pyongyang. I was told that the farm lacks good species of mother fish, so I came to obtain them here.

The official now realized that he came a long way to obtain fish for the carp farm.

He pleaded with him to have a good rest, adding that he would have them caught and sent to Pyongyang.

The General noted that there was no need to trouble the local residents and, pointing at his entourage, said that they should do it as it would benefit people.

Then he taught them how to catch fish without getting it hurt and said that he would inspect their work.

The officials picked up scoop nets and other tools and dispersed in pairs.

The county official implored the General to have a rest holding the fishing rod.

The latter said that he did not need to catch fish because inspection was his job. He told the official that they met after a long separation and should have a talk.

He strolled along the shore, inquiring about the county's work and giving important instructions.

Hours passed, and other officials gathered, each carrying a bundle of fish.

He asked the one with the smallest bundle where he had netted.

The latter replied that he had netted in the lower reaches of the stream where the current was swift but it was quite deep and clear.

The General said: Seeing your small catch, I guessed so. Carps live near to the bottom, so you must pitch the net deep into the water to make a good catch. They prefer slow current and muddy water at the bottom.

The officials collected the fish in a puddle.

With a satisfied look the General instructed some of them to sort out carps without getting them hurt.

Some officials stepped into the puddle but were at a loss what to do.

The General laughed merrily, saying that they could not distinguish carp from goldfish and teaching them how to do it.

When they finished sorting out the fish, the county official told him that he would parcel up good fish species for him.

But the latter declined this offer and said, **“Thank you for your favour. But I have a different idea.”**

He went on: The fish over there should be sent to the dormitory in the county. At the dormitory they may not feel full all the time, and they will like fish soup. All these here should be sent to the workers who are performing feats of labour at the construction site of Kwangbok Street. They are taking much trouble.

He stressed, **“Then our visit here will be more worthwhile.”**

Politics for the Future

On March 30, 1993, when the situation in the country was still tense after he proclaimed a state of semi-war, Kim Jong Il visited the renovated Songdowon International Children’s Camp.

Looking at the camp, which had been completely transformed, he was satisfied with its excellent location and layout.

Not to Spoil Children’s Pleasure. Kim Jong Il was guided to a new building. He looked carefully at the furniture, floor, ceiling and interior of the lavatory, and praised that the rooms were as good as those of a hotel, and the beds and other furniture were excellent, as well as the lavatory.

At the corridor connecting the building to the mess hall he looked out of the window. He noticed something near a dense pine forest and asked officials what it was.

One of them answered that it was a military facility.

It had been built in anticipation of a showdown with the enemy in the late 1960s when the *Pueblo* incident orchestrated by the US imperialists precipitated a hair-trigger situation in the country.

Until then many officials had been to the camp but there was nobody who had paid attention to the facility. Some of them even

presumed that such a military facility should be there because the situation in the country remained acute.

However, the General immediately ordered that the facility be removed, stressing that it should not have been built in the compound of the children's camp.

He was worried that it might spoil the pleasure of the children who were enjoying themselves at the camp.

Nothing to Spare. At the kitchen of the mess hall he looked closely at the equipment and advised that the ice cream machine should be replaced with a modern one. At the birthday room he said that the children who were to spend their birthdays during their camping period would be very pleased when they received congratulations and posed for a photograph there.

At the circular restaurant he asked how much money was spent in renovating the camp.

After hearing an official's reply, he said:

"There is nothing to spare because the children's camp is a present I have decided to bestow on our children."

He went on: I am very pleased that this large modern camp with an area of 40 000 square metres has been renovated for the good of our children. Songdowon International Children's Camp is a present the Party has prepared with warm affection for children. Probably, it would be unimaginable in those countries where socialism collapsed and capitalist countries that such an excellent present as Songdowon International Children's Camp is presented to children. Such a thing can happen only in our country where the politics for the future generation is administered.

He underlined that camping should be organized so amusingly that all students would look forward to being there.

Infinite Affection. He said that as the children would tour Mt Kumgang and Masik Pass during the camping

period, scrupulous arrangements should be made so that they could have a pleasant time, pitching tents and enjoying mountaineering. He stressed that a cooperative farm and a fishing cooperative should be assigned to take full charge of the supplies for the camp, such as meat, eggs and fish, adding that one more central children's camp should be set up in Mt Kumgang and Kwail County respectively, and a modern camp in every province.

He made the rounds of the newly-built hall, electronic recreation room, rooms for various circles and marine science diffusion room.

He instructed officials to calculate how much it would cost to build an aquarium, stressing that it must be built at the camp.

He continued to say that 100 plastic boats should be manufactured for the wading pool of the camp, amusement facilities set up on a vacant lot beside the pool, and transportation means and a repair base provided for the maintenance of the camp.

He said: The Party ensured that Songdowon International Children's Camp has been renovated in the latest fashion, so the League of Socialist Working Youth should keep it in a good state of maintenance. The officials in charge of extracurricular education of students and other young people should organize camping well in conformity with their age and psychological characteristics and steadily improve the contents of the camping activities, so as to ensure that they get more substantial benefits from the Party's affection and benevolent care.

After looking round the camp, he left for the inspection of the front line. His affection for children was infinite, indeed.

The following song was very popular among children, as well as adults.

*On this spring holiday in April
Our General is going to the soldiers' units.
Seeing children on the way to the camp,*

*He waves to them in his car.
He goes to the front line and the children to the camp.*

*The General sees rugged mountains ahead of him,
And the children see the sun rising above the sea.*

...

The General and the People

On July 7, 1995, one day before the inauguration of the then Kumsusan Memorial Palace, many people were working to lay out the green area along the road between an underground railway station and the memorial palace.

Grey-haired men, children with red kerchiefs tied around their necks and students were tending the trees and flowers, sweeping the road, watering the flowers in the park, pruning the branches and mowing the lawn.

As they were working, a tram was seen coming along the newly laid rails towards them from the palace. Some stopped working, and looked up to see the tram.

“The General is on the tram!”

“Hurrah! Hurrah!”

The shouts were followed by thunderous cheers, and people rushed towards the moving tram. Young people, women, children and old men were running after it, only to see their dear leader.

Having talks with officials in the tram, Kim Jong Il saw the people following it. He rose from his seat and waved to them. They cheered and shouted in tears, still running.

Worried that they might fall down, he kept waving to them. A girl stumbled over a bush, got up and trotted along after the tram.

The tram stopped short of the turnaround, surrounded by the cheering crowd.

The people hedging in the tram closer and closer, an official persuaded them to make way for it as the General was busy.

They moved out of the rails and the tram passed the turnaround.

It accelerated towards the palace, and yet the cheering continued behind it.

The General, looking back, said in a choking voice:

“Our people are really good.

“To think that I am breathing the same air as such people and working with them, I have made up my mind to strive harder for the revolution.”

Regardless of the Cost

On October 21, 1997 Kim Jong Il visited the newly-built Songam Myonggi Cattle Farm.

Dressed in a white overall, the General looked round the interior of the cattle farm. Giving fodder to the animals in the corrals, he said, **“I am very pleased to see those plump cattle, and they look so tempting.”**

Unlike other cattle farms it is advantageous in that it mass-produces beef by intensive methods by feeding cattle in the corrals, not allowing them to graze in grassland, he noted. He said with satisfaction that now the people could be supplied with delicious beef.

Looking for a while at the animals shaking their heads and chewing the cud, he joked, **“In the past cattle could hear a cowherd playing on a flute as they were left grazing in the fields, but now they cannot do so as they have been locked in the corrals.”**

For many ages cowherds blew on flutes, herding their cattle to graze on pastures. They played idyllic songs to allay the arduousness of crossing mountains and valleys.

The industrial breeding of cattle by intensive methods put an end to the history of cowherds.

The General was looking round the corrals with a broad smile, when an official broached the subject of reimbursing the beef production cost.

The problem was weighing long on the latter's mind but the General looked unpleasant.

After a pause, he said: You are worrying too much about it. We have never calculated the cost before we do things for the benefit of people. We must spare nothing for them. It is for our people that we need money and produce meat. We must think hard to increase the output of beef, rather than worry about the cost. In his lifetime President Kim Il Sung took pains to provide our people with more meat and eggs. He passed away and we must realize his wish. You should double the beef production at this cattle farm. To do so, you should intensify scientific research and develop ways for boosting production.

Our Own Things

Kim Jong Il visited the Hamhung Youth Electric Appliances Factory on September 23, 1999.

More Valuable. The General looked round the case-assembling shop and then the ordinary appliances shop. There he saw a switchboard that was being assembled.

The manager of the factory told him that they were switchboards and panel boards to be sent to the small- and medium-sized power stations under construction.

A smile passed over his face.

The manager was baffled as the case for the main body of the switchboard looked jagged. He murmured, smiling awkwardly, that

the case was made from an old drum as steel plates were not easily available.

The General looked surprised at this explanation and said that he was not faulting the shape of the case.

After studying every nook and cranny of the switchboard, he told officials that its rough surface did not matter and there was no need to find fault with the cases for the switchboards and panel boards made from old drums.

Then he said:

“Power is generated from an electric generator, not a switchboard or panel board. I do not like boasting of the large buildings and gleaming switchboards and other incidental equipment for small- and medium-sized power stations.”

The officials flushed crimson with embarrassment.

He resumed: When I was inspecting a unit, I saw a glittering switchboard imported from a foreign country. It broke down and it was all but impossible to repair it because its parts were not available. I was convinced that nothing is better than our own things.

Then he moved to the assembly shop and examined the emergency power cutout that the workers developed by themselves.

He inquired about the technical specifications of the device as compared to its imported counterpart and said that the Korean device was clearly superior and its quality was good though it did not look so attractive as the imported device.

The Only Way for Survival. He was happy looking round the factory. He examined a switch that was being assembled and named it twin switch, saying that it might be useful in rural dwellings both for connection to an electric cooker and keeping boiled rice warm. Then he went over an electric cooker and praised that the Korean product was excellent and it was most suitable to

the situation in the countryside and by no means inferior to a foreign cooker.

He told officials that such good things should be produced in large quantities and supplied to the people, stressing that he would have assistance rendered to the factory and it should turn out smart electric appliances with confidence.

He halted in front of the process for making electric control equipment and watched the employees at work.

After a while he turned round and told officials that the previous year he had tasked a machine factory with producing hundreds of machine tools and it completed the task because the workers of this factory overcame difficulties and manufactured necessary electric control appliances in sufficient numbers.

He praised the manager of the factory for maintaining regular production in such a difficult situation.

Then he asked him what the secret of regular production was.

The manager was perplexed and, after drawing breath, told him what had happened when he went abroad to purchase equipment. The foreign company he was dealing with offered exorbitant prices at the talks.

Enraged at this shameless behaviour, he stated that he would not buy them and his factory would manufacture such equipment at all costs.

The foreigners sneered at him, and he made up his mind to make the equipment so as to defend the national dignity.

The General agreed with the manager and told him that it is just the revolutionary spirit of self-reliance, and dependence on foreign forces will lead the nation to ruin.

Then he said to the officials, **“A man without self-respect is as good as dead.”**

Self-Reliance. Now he was standing in front of an assembly stand at the Youth Control Appliances Shop. He picked

up the nearly-assembled button switch and terminal board for a machine tool and operated them. He said that the button switch of the factory did not look nice but its quality was quite good, reiterating that he liked Korean products most. He added that if the problem of reliability was resolved, it would be immaculate and the terminal board was of high quality.

He asked how many terminals it had.

An official replied 12, adding that the board might be fitted with two to 50 terminals according to customer needs.

The General praised that the product would be much in demand at the Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications and relevant sectors. Noting that springs were the key to the reliability of electric control appliances, he asked where the factory was obtaining the springs.

This expert question filled officials with admiration.

Another official answered that the factory had imported such springs but now it was manufacturing them by tapping spare materials.

The General asked him if the factory had a shop for reprocessing the materials. He was still doubtful as the products had to go through exacting technical processes.

The official answered, "The reprocessing shop has not been well equipped, and it draws and reheats steel leaf springs and piano strings."

Satisfied with this reply, the General told other officials that "Self-reliance is the only way to survive!" was truly a good slogan. Then he asked the manager what was the motive for the factory to choose to fend for itself, praising once again that it had made a lot of achievements by itself.

The latter said, "You set the factories in Jagang Province as a model and instructed that other factories should follow suit."

"You mean you have been to those factories."

"Yes, sir. There were many things to learn."

“Um...”

Nodding to the manager, the General said that his factory gave him a great encouragement that day, highly praising it for having developed many products in recent years in the revolutionary spirit of self-reliance.

He went on, **“If we work hard with confidence in victory as the officials of this factory do, we can achieve anything and will surely build a thriving country.”**

Half Water and Half Fish

On May 9, 2000 Kim Jong Il visited a newly built catfish farm. Quite different from common fish ponds, the catfish farm was furnished with modern facilities for mass-producing tens of thousands of catfish in cylindrical ponds to put production on an industrial and intensive basis.

The General praised that the farm was built superbly as befits a structure in the era of the Workers’ Party and, if the roofing was completed and the surrounding area laid out well, the farm would look better than a guesthouse.

Then he said, **“The room for artificial incubation has been furnished well. It resembles a smart scientific research base.”**

An official told him that at the farm no more than 15 women were producing hundreds of tons of catfish a year.

The General spoke highly of their strenuous efforts.

The ponds for fattening were teeming with stout catfish. It was quite a thrilling sight.

He said joyfully. **“Indeed, it is half water and half fish.”**

Officials were more than excited as this phrase illustrated the high productivity of catfish.

Noting that the ponds for fattening were cylindrical and it was

the key to intensive farming of catfish, the General said: Catfish farming is a highly productive and lucrative business, since they grow quickly and consume comparatively little feed, and they can be bred intensively. Moreover, they are delicious, nutritious and have medicinal efficacy.

He went on to underline the need to breed catfish extensively in hot springs.

Half water and half fish, intensive farming of catfish!

Since then this phrase has been known as emblematic of the standard of the country's fish farming set by the General.

“Interview” for Reunification

In early August 2000, following the publication of the historic June 15 Joint Declaration, a delegation of the south Korean mass media arrived in Pyongyang.

The delegation was composed of the high-hatted senior executives representing the south Korean media circles.

Kim Jong Il met them on August 12.

This meeting was later headlined *Shocking Interview*.

Single-Hearted Unity and Military Might. During the talks he asked a senior executive, **“How many years have you been engaged in journalism?”**

The guest hesitated a while and replied that he had been involved in journalism for several decades.

Kim Jong Il said, **“Then you must have written anti-communist articles for 80 to 90 per cent of your career.”**

Laughter burst out among other guests who, from a professional habit, had been keyed up for his questions.

This enlivened the atmosphere of the gathering. When they were entreating the officials of the north for an audience with

Kim Jong Il, they pledged that they would never ask him any questions during the talks or luncheon. Now instincts were prompting them to stand up one after another.

Unexpectedly, the gathering turned into an interview.

A member of the delegation raised a question as to where the source of his strength for defending socialism lay.

Kim Jong Il answered immediately: It is military strength. The source of my strength is twofold. First, there is single-hearted unity and, second, there is military might. Only with a strong military force can one deal with relations with foreign countries from the independent standpoint. We still need this strong force even in the case of having close ties with other countries. Otherwise, our country may follow the same path as the feudal Joson dynasty in its final days under the reign of the Regent Prince Taewon or Empress Myongsong.

National Cooperation. The south Korean guests grew more excited as Kim Jong Il promptly answered all their questions very clearly by referring to his broad knowledge, keen insight and humorous anecdotes.

Another guest said, “The north’s animations and computer software have reached the world standard. I think the north will rake it in if it cooperates with other countries in this field.”

Kim Jong Il laughed heartily, and said: If the north and the south cooperate in this field, each side will get half of the profits. It means all the profits will be for the Koreans. Then why should the north cooperate with other countries?

At the moment a phrase in the June 15 Joint Declaration came to their minds—By Our Nation Itself!

His answer stated that By Our Nation Itself was not an empty slogan and reaffirmed that all the Korean people must join efforts to put an end to the tragedy of national division.

The Day of Reunification.
and many guests were still active.

The interview lasted long

Suddenly, one of them, who remained silent all along, stood up and asked, "When do you think Korea will be reunified?"

To all, it was a great surprise because they considered it somewhat rude. As a matter of fact, no one could dare predict when Korea would become one again as it remained divided for more than half a century.

All stared at the man, who blushed with shame.

However, Kim Jong Il answered kindly and perspicuously: It depends on a decision by the north and south of Korea. Depending on how we make up our minds and how the Korean people pool their efforts, Korea's reunification can be resolved immediately or not.

All clapped their hands as a token of their admiration for his concise and meaningful reply to the difficult question.

Sydney or Seoul.
cordial mood. One of the guests asked Kim Jong Il whether he would accept the invitation from the chairman of the International Olympic Committee, extended to him and President Kim Dae Jung, to attend the Sydney Olympic Games.

Silence reigned for a minute. It was a sensitive issue in the light of the political situation.

At last Kim Jong Il said that he had not been informed of the invitation, adding that he could not make time to visit Seoul, where his fellow countrymen lived, much less Sydney.

He went on, **"In fact, I have not yet been to Seoul to meet my fellow countrymen in the south, and there is no reason why I should go to far-off Sydney to perform like an actor!"**

After a pause he resumed that he would like to visit Seoul, Jeju Island and Pusan, but he could not find time because of his tight schedule.

The guests became stenographers, noting down his words.

The following day the full text of Kim Jong Il's discourse at the luncheon was carried on the whole two pages of newspapers in south Korea.

“Special Lecture” on Liquor

On February 23, 2002 Kim Jong Il was looking round a new liquor shop at the Taehongdan Potato-Processing Factory.

Displayed at one side of the packaging room were bottles of potato liquor. The alcohol contents were 25%, 30%, 40%, etc, but the bottles looked alike. So did the trademarks.

The General was unhappy about it but an official began to brag about the products.

Citing a European wine, he said, “The product of this factory is better than the wine. This foreign product contains 30mg of aldehyde and methanol per litre, and the potato liquor, 4mg. That's why one hardly feels a headache and can soon recover from a hangover.”

The General commented that such a liquor could not be called good because people would drink liquor to feel drunken.

He picked up an uncapped bottle and smelt it.

Officials stood anxiously for his comment as if they were students eager for their test results.

Laughing aloud, he said, **“It smells like moonshine.”**

This humorous comparison created a ripple of laughter among the officials, who were impressed by his keen wit.

The official, who was boasting of the liquor, felt ashamed.

The General told him in an encouraging tone that it got off to a good start and it was necessary to give wide publicity to the potato liquor, stressing that its high quality should be advertised in international market as well.

The official was filled with remorse and made up his mind to develop the liquor into a quality product with a unique taste.

The General advised that the designs and colours of trademarks and bottles of the liquor should vary according to its alcohol contents. Then he asked officials if they knew about world-famous brands, their histories and alcohol contents.

They all stood dumb.

He said with a smile, **“Since olden times *soju* has been famous in our country and I cannot see the reason why the potato liquor with an alcohol content of 25% is not called *soju*. As its alcohol content is low, *soju* has been warmed up before drinking.”**

He went on to tell about some other brands: Japanese *sake* is 16%. Historically, the Japanese have preferred to drink it. They do not like *soju* because it is stronger than *sake*. Vodka originated in Russia. Its alcohol contents are 42% and 45%. In Russia they do not produce liquor with an alcohol content lower than 42%. Vodka is cooled before drinking, and it smells fragrant. The Russians keep ice chips in a fridge and put them in the cups. Vodka has a good taste. China’s famous brands are *mao-tai* and *baijiu*. They are very strong. ...

In this way he gave a detailed account of Korean *soju* and other foreign brands, their histories, alcohol contents and ways of drinking.

Officials were attentive to this “special lecture” as if they were listening to an interesting fairy-tale from a teacher.

The General finished his story by reiterating that the potato liquor from Taehongdan should win fame in international market.

Now this liquor wins the top prize at the national liquor show that is held every year in the country, and it has gained much popularity among foreigners.

At a Livestock Branch Farm

On July 18, 2002, when hostile forces were claiming on account of the difficulties facing the DPRK that socialist Korea would implode, Kim Jong Il visited a livestock branch

farm that the people in Kusong laid out at the Namsan Cooperative Farm.

From an observation post the General had a bird's-eye view of the buildings in the branch farm, praising the fine scenery of the farm and the achievements made by the city.

Aren't those goats over there?

He pointed to the goats moving in a flock on the mountain.

An official replied yes.

The General asked the number of goats, the females in particular. Surveying the mountains nearby, he praised the wonderful scenery again.

Another official, pointing at the corrals, said that cattle were out grazing on the fields.

"How many cattle do you have?" asked the General.

The official said that the branch farm had dozens of cattle and was raising them to be used as draught animals at workteams.

The General asked what it had besides the cattle.

The official replied that it had geese, pigs and rabbits.

"Now do you raise cattle at the corrals or send them to graze on the fields?"

"In the main we allow them to graze."

The official pointed at the foot of a mountain where the animals were roaming about.

Gazing at them, the General said that he could see the cattle and praised that the branch farm was laudable and achieved a lot without much publicity.

He told officials in a confident voice, **"I think it would be good to invite all those, who assert that our country is imploding, to come here. Also, it would not be bad to invite the journalists in the West, who are in the habit of backbiting others, to come here and see with their own eyes how our people are striving to live on their own."**

He said with a broad laugh that the Namsan Cooperative Farm would now wish to expand the livestock farming and export processed meat in large quantities to make money.

The officials joined the laughter.

Strong Molar Teeth

On August 1, 2007 Kim Jong Il visited the Ranam Coal-Mining Machine Complex.

At the shop floor where the workers and technicians were stepping up the assembling of a large machine in its final stages, the General inquired in detail about its parts and components.

While answering his questions, the manager felt regretful for the fact that the machine was operated by a program logic control unit, a lower version than that which had been planned.

He explained, "According to the original design, this machine was to be operated by a system of AC servo motor and ball-jointed screw. But it has been redesigned to be equipped with a program logic control unit."

To his surprise, however, the General said, **"The workers at Ranam who are unfailingly loyal to the Party, despite the shortage of all materials and the difficulty of conditions, have given full play to the revolutionary spirit of self-reliance and fortitude and their creative wisdom, making innovations in manufacturing new, modern machines."**

The manager was perplexed by this undeserved praise. The AC servo motor was a high-tech product as it could automatically regulate the speed and power while in operation. That's why the management of the complex had planned to use it, with the conviction that it accorded with the Party's call for steadily developing new things.

The manager pledged that they would from now on adopt the system of AC servo motor and ball-jointed screw.

The General advised that the system did not conform to the country's actual conditions.

He explained to the manager: Under the existing conditions, the hydraulic model suits our economy. If we use a machine operated by the system of AC servo motor and ball-jointed screw, accuracy of voltage and frequency should be ensured in the electric power systems. Now this is all but impossible. It is your subjective desire to make a machine run by the above system. Of course, we must manufacture such a machine in the future.

The manager felt ashamed for his narrow vision.

The General had keen insight into the overall economic conditions of the country and, instantly discerning the officials' unrealistic plans, would advise them against seeking impractical solutions to scientific and technological problems.

As if he was still appreciating the manager's pluck and ambitiousness, he resumed: A man with strong molar teeth can munch at hard food. For the present we should make hydraulic machines. After building up the foundations of production to ensure rated voltage and frequency, we should gradually switch over to developing machines operated by the system of AC servo motor and ball-jointed screw. I think that attempting to make such machines now is an impractical plan.

He reiterated that hydraulic machines suited the country's actual conditions and the machine equipped with a computer-operated NC device was really excellent. He instructed the manager to continue to direct efforts to manufacturing hydraulic machines like the one he saw that day.

Flames of Innovation

It is not long since the Samilpho Specialities Factory has been widely known around the country. Technological innovation that

was effected at this factory fanned the flames of a revolution in the foodstuff-processing industry.

It was on April 7, 2009 that Kim Jong Il visited the factory.

Outwardly, it did not look so majestic—a yard surrounded by two-storey buildings for production.

But it boasted a wide product range—bread, noodles, confectionery, oil, liquor, honey, seafood, pickles, traditional tonics, beverage, ceramics, etc.

It depended entirely on locally available raw materials to feed the production lines, introduced advanced technology in processing and packaging, and established cultured practices in production.

He was all smiles looking round the room dedicated to the history of the factory and the shop floor.

He said: It resembles a foodstuff show at the Three-Revolution Exhibition House. All products here have been made in our country. This can be called a spark for a revolution in the foodstuff-processing industry. This is precisely the groundwork for bringing about a revolution in light industry, the foodstuff-processing sector in particular. Today I am happier than on the day when our artificial satellite *Kwangmyongsong 2* achieved orbit.

Then he went on to say to the factory officials:

I extend my heartfelt thanks, in the name of the Supreme Commander, to the officials and all other employees of this factory who have rendered a positive contribution to improving the dietary life of our service personnel and people by sprucing up the factory and mass-producing hundreds of kinds of quality goods by themselves in line with the requirements of the Songun era.

Though with some hesitation, the manager requested the General to meet his meritorious employees who had worked at the factory for ten years since its inauguration.

Kim Jong Il said, **“I agree with you, manager. Send for all of them.”**

After a while he greeted the laudable employees and highly praised them for having worked hard in the revolutionary soldier spirit and the revolutionary spirit of self-reliance and fortitude to bring such huge benefits. Calling them patriots and meritorious workers, he posed for a photograph with them.

Then he moved to a shop attached to the factory and looked carefully at the counters stacked with commodities.

He said that he was very happy to see them and, noticing *makkoli* (crude liquor–Tr.), asked about the demand for it.

Told that the demand was growing, he said:

We are buying five bottles of this liquor.

Where is the cashier? Pay her money.

“Yes, sir,” answered an official.

Credit sale must not be allowed at a shop.

He said with a stern look and then laughed.

The officials laughed, too. Some minutes ago, while looking round the factory, the General asked the manager what was the best liquor at the factory. The latter replied that it was the one made from songi mushroom of Mt Chilbo. The General advised the officials in his company to buy liquor and other foodstuffs.

Then he emphasized, **“And you must pay the price.”**

At that time there was nobody among them, who could read his mind. He was conceiving a plan to raise the flames of a revolution in light industry across the country with an example set by this factory as the initial spark.

Respect Paid to Workers

On May 20, 2009, Kim Jong Il visited the then Taehung Youth Mine.

An official said that the mine completed the magnesia clinker production line in keeping with the actual conditions of the country.

Smiling happily, the General praised its achievement and said that it was precisely the Korean mode of production and Juche-oriented industry.

He continued: The mine has established the Juche orientation in the production of fireproof materials and this can be called a revolution. It is a great achievement that has brought about an epochal turn in developing our industry. It is as significant as the success in a nuclear test. President Kim Il Sung would be very pleased if he could see this.

The General stood quiet as if he was yearning for the President who had been so much concerned about the domestic production of fireproof materials.

He resumed after some minutes: The workers of the Taehung Youth Mine are adding brilliance to the President's revolutionary ideology, the Juche idea, not in words but through hard struggle. They have demonstrated its validity and vitality. They are laudable, indeed.

Praising that the designers, technicians and workers who had been involved in the production of fireproof materials were all heroes, the General said:

“The Taehung Youth Mine should be renamed Taehung Youth Hero Mine.”

Looking at a map showing the production processes, he moved closer to it, still saying nothing.

All eyes were turned towards the map.

In front of the map the General reiterated that the workers of the mine had performed a great feat and said:

“As the workers are not here with me, I will pay my respect, as a token of admiration for them, to the map showing the fireproof materials production lines of our own style.”

He then made a bow to the map and the officials clapped their hands.

Ten out of Ten

On October 20, 2009 Kim Jong Il looked round the new flats on Mansudae Street.

He made the rounds of a park and apartment blocks there and went into a flat.

At the kitchen he patted tiles on the wall and praised that it was well furnished and the joints between the tiles looked nice as they were thin, adding that he had presumed they would be thick.

An official, pointing at the duct, said that the kitchen had the channel for conveying the slops for the convenience of wives.

The General said with satisfaction, **“It is good that you have a duct for conveying the slops fitted into the kitchen. If the kitchen has such a channel, wives will be pleased about it.”**

He opened the cupboard and looked carefully at its interior and exterior.

Staring at one of its corners, he said: It is good that the kitchen is furnished with a cupboard, but it is regrettable that it has no holes in it.

The officials wondered why there should be holes in the cupboard.

The General resumed, **“If the cupboard is made airtight, the food in it may decay. It should have a hole so that it can be ventilated.”**

The officials were moved by his parental care.

Now the General was passing entrance 1, block 3, section 3.

He halted in front of the entrance and asked an official, **“Why is this entrance 1?”**

“Section 3 has ten entrances. You have just dropped in at entrance 10,” answered an official.

“At entrance 1, block 3, section 3, I can see only the number of the entrance, and I think the number of the block should be there as well.”

He said that if there was only the number of the entrance, people from provinces would have difficulty finding their relatives’ flats, adding that they might take a wrong turn and get lost like the hero of the film of the former Soviet Union *Irony of Fate or a Nice Bath*.

At this joke the officials burst out laughing.

The official, who had explained the layout of the residential section to the General, felt ashamed, still smiling.

After looking round the street, he commented: The interior of the flats—kitchens, lavatories and living rooms—has been designed in such a way as to provide every convenience for the comfort of the residents in their family life. The more I see them, the more wonderful they look. The designs and building work for the flats on Mansudae Street are excellent. I have not seen such fine flats until now. They are so well furnished that I want to live in one of them.

He continued:

“The flats on Mansudae Street serve as models and standards of the flats where all our people would live in a thriving country.”

He reiterated that they were immaculate, stressing that of the units he had inspected, he gave full marks to those that were satisfactory and he would give the best marks to the flats on Mansudae Street.

He asked if the new flats would be allocated to all the households who had lived on the street before its demolition.

An official said yes and went on:

“The people often come here to see the flats. They are very happy to learn that tap-water is supplied all day long and each flat has a duct and water heater. They say they are grateful to

you, asking when they can move into these new flats.”

The General underlined that prompt measures should be taken for those people and others to move into the flats and, after that, it was necessary to get feedback from them.

He said, **“If all the residents who would move into the flats on Mansudae Street say that they are content with them, then I will give it ten out of ten.”**

Before leaving the street, he pointed out that the ongoing project for building 100 000 flats in Pyongyang should be completed at a higher standard than the Mansudae Street project.

Towards a Higher Goal

On December 9, 2009 Kim Jong Il visited a factory in the northern part of the country.

CNC Press. While inspecting the factory in January the previous year, he had tasked it with modernizing the production lines by introducing CNC technology. Now he was learning about the results in the shop floor.

He was pleased to see that it upgraded the production lines as a whole in a matter of two years, filling a workshop with an assortment of presses and installing dozens of more CNC machines.

An official of the factory told him, “Here we are at the press shop. CNC technology has been introduced in operating the presses as you instructed.”

“Good,” said the General.

Another official said, “As they are processed by CNC machines, all products pass the quality test.”

And still another said, “The workers like working with the computer. Some say they feel as if they are idlers.”

The General joked, **“I am afraid they may be made redundant.”**

The officials could see that this joke was implying they should be effective in labour administration as the introduction of CNC technology was being stepped up.

One of them told him that the 2 500-ton press, which lay idle during the Arduous March, had been transformed into a CNC machine.

The General moved to the general control room and examined its operating processes that were displayed in real time on a computer screen.

“Turning the 2 500-ton press into a CNC machine is not so easy,” said he, still scrutinizing the screen.

An official said, “You are right, sir. It was not easy. But the machine that had been hibernating for two decades has woken up.”

Nodding, the General said, **“It hibernated for 20 years and now it is time to run it at full capacity. How good it is that CNC technology has been introduced.”**

With a beaming face he looked at the girls in neat overalls controlling the 1 200-ton press on a computer screen.

An official said, “As you instructed, we have remodelled the presses into CNC machines, so even girls can operate them. The workers are grateful to you, General, for having freed themselves from hard, back-breaking labour.”

The General said in a choking voice, **“Now their labour has been made easy. Really easy.”**

Time to Write a Treatise. While looking round the factory, the General said quietly to an official from a national agency, **“In case of reinvestment you must give careful consideration to the project for it.”**

This was what he often said as he was inspecting the units where the CNC drive was in full swing.

Given the country’s difficult economic situation, the objectives and amount of reinvestment were of fundamental importance.

Reinvestment was precisely aimed at achieving success in the campaign to go beyond the cutting edge.

However, the officials could not comprehend why he was setting a higher goal for modernization when he was referring to reinvestment. In other words, it was important to give officials a proper understanding of reinvestment.

The General resumed:

“At present you have just increased the processing speed and improved the quality of products. Figuratively speaking, you have just taken an exam for university admission.”

The official from a national agency realized that he was shouldering a heavy responsibility.

The factories, which had been renovated by introducing CNC technology, were striving to draw up plans according to their specific conditions, but they were far below the standard set by the General.

The official admitted that he had not yet completed the reinvestment plan.

The General said sternly that reinvestment must be made and properly at that, stressing that if they rested on their laurels, the achievements they had made so far would come to naught.

Then he said to a factory official, **“This is not the end of the CNC drive. You have taken the exam for university admission until now and it is time to write a treatise.”**

The official pledged that they would follow his instructions.

The General went on: You must accelerate the CNC drive to attain a higher goal. Go beyond the cutting edge is a slogan for all economic sectors, and those leading the drive must advance ahead of others.

Peaches and Pickled Cucumbers

In August 2011 Kim Jong Il paid an unofficial visit to Siberia and Far East region of Russia.

On the 21st, after looking round the Bureya hydropower station, the governor of Amur arranged a luncheon in honour of the DPRK leader there.

The table was filled with a wide assortment of dishes.

The Russian President's chief delegate to the Far Eastern Federal District nudged the governor and gave him a nod as a token of satisfaction.

Kim Jong Il with a broad smile asked if the fruits and vegetables on the table were from Amur.

The governor said yes and the chief delegate affirmed that they were.

Kim Jong Il asked:

Is that so? Then are these peaches from Amur as well?

To this question the governor could not give an answer, blushing with embarrassment.

As a matter of fact, the peaches were not from Amur.

The governor said, "Frankly speaking, these peaches have been imported. By the way, how do you know that? You are knowledgeable, indeed."

Kim Jong Il said: Don't mention it. As far as I know, peaches do not grow well in this region. When I was in China, I saw peaches of this species. So I have asked you the question.

Both the governor and the chief delegate were struck with admiration for the DPRK leader.

Well, why aren't there pickled cucumbers on the table?

Kim Jong Il asked again.

It is widely known that the Russians like drinking and they drink mostly with pickled cucumbers and salted herring.

The governor said that pickled cucumbers seemed inappropriate to the occasion.

Kim Jong Il said:

You have not had pickled cucumbers put on the table, and I guess you have no intention of drinking with me.

“No, sir. I will have them prepared immediately,” said the governor.

The dish was brought in no time and the governor, as well as the chief delegate, was drinking in small sips.

Kim Jong Il asked:

Why don't you drink, chief delegate?

“The President instructed me to attend you with scrupulous care, stressing that I must never drink.”

You must do as your President instructed. But the governor should drink.

“How can I drink as my superior doesn't?”

Then I will not insist any more. I wish you come to our country later. This is my formal invitation. You must follow my instructions in Korea. Then I can see how much you can drink.

Kim Jong Il said this and laughed. Everyone was smiling and the atmosphere grew friendlier.

For People's Happiness

On December 4, 2011, despite the biting cold, Kim Jong Il visited the Kaeson Youth Park.

His Pleasure. The General was greeted at the amusement park by officials, and asked them if it was all right to switch on the amusements.

An official replied, “Yes, sir. When you were here on May 25 last year, the foundations of the chairplane were shaky. It could not be operated as they were being built up. You said that you would come again when it was running normally. Today you have kept the promise.”

The General said that he was there to learn about the maintenance and operation of the amusement park of the Kaeson

Youth Park, underlining that they should work harder to provide the people with a happy life to be envied by the world.

Then he inquired about the details one by one, and another official told him that the amusements had been in normal operation so far and the public catering service network, including the bakery, was prospering.

The General beamed with pleasure and, while moving towards the amusements, he asked one question after another—Do the people like them; has there been any accident; how much are the fees for the amusements. ...

An official said in a choking voice, “We are grateful to you for re-visiting this amusement park to ensure the people a happy life.”

The General said:

“The senior official of the Taesongsan Guidance Bureau says that he is grateful to me for re-visiting the amusement park of the Kaeson Youth Park on this cold Sunday, and it is my pleasure to ensure the people a happy life.”

Firsthand Experience.

towards the chairplane.

Now the General was walking

He said:

“The amusements should be switched on. Today all the officials here should get the firsthand experience of them.”

Officials were seated in the chairs and the chairplane was powered up.

The General gazed at the undulating chairs, and asked an official of the park if there were many visitors there and how they liked it.

The official answered, “People say it is a great fun, and they feel sorry to leave the park. After the park was renovated under your close concern, airmen were the first to take the amusements. They liked them very much.”

The General said that he was pleased to hear it, and then asked which amusement they liked best.

The official enumerated, "Chairplane, mad mouse, ..."

The General said: I think that the most popular of the amusements in the amusement park of the Kaeson Youth Park is the chairplane whose axis may reach an angle of 120 degrees. You say that besides the chairplane, people like mad mouse. In my opinion Z-force will be more popular than mad mouse.

Then he asked the official how they would feel after taking the chairplane.

Listening to his reply, he resumed: You say that after taking the chairplane, people were so frightened that they vowed never to take it again. But later they had another try. It must be a thrilling experience.

Right on cue, the chairplane was touching down.

It was a pleasant thrill of excitement, and it seemed as if five minutes was a blink of an eye.

Those who were watching the scene on the ground shouted with joy.

The chairplane stopped and the officials got off.

The General asked them how they felt.

Their answers were interesting.

"It was exhilarating."

"When it reached the top, I was so terrified."

"It dissipated all my fatigue."

Still smiling, the General moved towards the Z-force. Noting that he was very pleased that the citizens, young people in particular, liked it and were vying to take it, he joked that there would be some who might piss themselves on the machine.

An official said, "In most cases it is women who suffer for it. In other countries there is an underwear stand beside the Z-force."

This elicited a loud laugh.

After learning about the technical specifications of the machine, the General said: Z-force is 54 metres high and the seats move up and down at the speed of 15 metres a second. Falling down will be

more frightening than rising up. I am afraid that if it breaks down while ascending, it will be impossible for the people to come down and an accident may occur.

Another official explained that emergency measures had been taken and it could be manually operated in case of a breakdown, adding that there had not been a single accident.

Now the General was relieved and resumed: I must emphasize again that what is the most important in the management and operation of the amusement park is to prevent accidents. The officials and operators must inspect the amusements and recreational facilities according to regulations and look after them in a responsible manner.

After that, officials took the Power Surge and Volare. Listening to their opinions, the General was beaming with satisfaction.

Hamburger. At the amusement park the General showed concern for the operation of the bakery.

Unlike other restaurants in the park it was a two-storey building that sat on a somewhat high location at the end of the Kaeson Youth Park. The bakery with large windows was easily noticeable.

He gazed at the building and said that the hamburger restaurant looked nice and the soldier-builders had built it in a good fashion. Then he asked an official if people liked hamburger.

Hamburger is world-famous.

Besides the bread, the restaurant serves roast chicken, fried eggs, sausage, potato porridge, green vegetables and tea. They were very popular among the customers.

According to a joint venture contract with a foreign country, the raw materials for the bakery were imported, as well as kitchen utensils and all other fixtures. Despite the huge cost, the General ensured that the foods were served at a very low price.

The official said that the customers liked hamburger very much.

The General said:

“You say the people are pleased that the bakery serves hamburger of fine quality at a cheap price. As they like it, I am happy, too.”

He referred to the need to run the restaurant effectively, underlining that it should ensure high quality and good service.

Illuminations. The General asked an official of the park about the illuminations.

The latter answered, “The illuminations are so gorgeous that many people come here only to see them.”

The General nodded and moved down the park.

The official was lost in deep thought.

...

According to the original plan, the amusement park was not designed to be open at night. The illuminations were not arranged in such a splendid way, because they were deemed necessary to add to the festive atmosphere on holidays or national anniversaries.

On April 22, 2010, just before the inauguration ceremony, Kim Jong Il visited the park and pointed out: As the light intensity in the compound of the park is low, it is necessary to install in a harmonious way more flood lights and lamps at the buildings, on the lanes and in the garden. Then night will be as bright as day in the amusement park of the Kaeson Youth Park and the surrounding area. And the amusement park should be open in the evening, not during the day.

Later, according to a unique design, the refashioning of the illuminations was done. ...

To the official who was still absorbed in thought, the General said:

“I have been told that our people come to the amusement park of the Kaeson Youth Park and enjoy themselves taking the amusements and seeing the kaleidoscopic illuminations at

night, saying they must be entering the gates of a thriving country. As they like it so much, I am glad.”

Pastry Stall. Now the General arrived at the pastry stall. It was a movable structure with wheels on the four corners of the bottom.

He was greeted by a salesgirl and, looking into the stall, asked her if the people liked pastries.

On the right of the rack was a rectangular tray with over 20 pastries and on the left, a small oven for baking them.

She replied that they liked the food very much.

The officials of the park said in a similar vein, stressing that it was in great demand.

The General said, **“You say that the people are sorry to leave the movable pastry stall as they love buying pastries at it. It is good.”**

Then he looked carefully at the salesgirls and said that they would feel cold as they were in flimsy dress. He asked one of them if she was not cold in the stall.

The girl said no in a pleasing voice.

He noted that he was relieved to hear that the salesgirls were not cold as they were standing beside the hot oven for baking pastries.

Then he read the cooking instructions at the stall and asked the price. After that, he said goodbye to the girls and left it.

Photograph. As some officials were enjoying the Volare, a woman official said to the General, “The citizens have a pleasant time at the Kaeson Youth Park. This is your fourth visit to the amusement park after its renovation. I wish you pose for a photograph against the background of the park today.”

The General accepted the request readily and, looking all around, said that he would pose there. Figuring out what the

background would look like, he motioned the woman to stand against the Volare and called other officials.

He said:

“The officials here have requested me to pose for a photograph today as I have come here for the fourth time after the amusement park of the Kaeson Youth Park was renovated. At this park that has been turned into an excellent cultural resort resounding with happy laughter of the working people, youth and students, I will pose for a photograph with officials against the background of the amusement.”

Happy Laughter. While the Volare was running, an official told the General about the number of visitors for the year and their feedback.

The General said: The people are so eager to enjoy themselves at the amusement park of the Kaeson Youth Park. It is good that this year alone over 800 000 people including workers, youth and students have come here and spent their leisure. Many foreigners on a visit to our country would like to see this park.

Then he asked if most visitors were the citizens of Pyongyang or those from provinces.

An official answered, “Besides Pyongyang citizens, many people from provinces come here. There are also some who visit the capital city to see the park. Among the audience for the mass gymnastics and artistic performance *Arirang*, those from provinces would come to the park even though it was too late. One day a man came here with his mother in her eighties, and she said she had no other regret in her life as she saw the splendid park with her own eyes.”

The General was satisfied that the people liked the park so much.

At the next leg he stressed that officials should work harder to provide the people with a happy life to be envied by the world.

Noting that the Party had a large sum invested to renovate the amusement park, he underlined the need to manage and operate it so effectively that the people would often come and have a good time without feeling any slight inconvenience.

Before leaving, he said to the officials:

“How the Party’s intention to provide the people with a more pleasant life is implemented depends entirely on how strenuously our officials work as their servants. All the officials of the units responsible for managing and operating the amusement park of the Kaeson Youth Park should keep in mind the Party’s slogan ‘We serve the people!’ and strive harder to ensure that their happy laughter rings out louder here.”

Printed in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea

No. 6835009

E-mail: flph@star-co.net.kp

<http://www.naenara.com.kp>



PYONGYANG, KOREA
JUCHE 105 (2016)

ISBN 978-9946-0-1382-4



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