

### **Life Devoted to Women's Emancipation**

Kim Jong Suk(December 24,1917-September 22,1949), who is held in high esteem by the Korean people as an anti-Japanese heroine, was an outstanding woman activist who devoted her whole life to women's social emancipation and the development of their movement

In the days of the colonial rule of the Japanese imperialism(1905-1945), she led the Korean women to turn out in the struggle for the country's liberation and the women's emancipation.

Kim Jong Suk participated in the anti-Japanese war commanded by Kim Il Sung, founding father of socialist Korea, winning the fame as an anti-Japanese heroine and woman general of Mt. Paektu. Thanks to her warm care, many women were trained to be excellent revolutionaries.

It happened when she was engaged for several months from April 1937 in underground activities in Taoquanli, northeast China. She taught the village women, who had been under darkness and ignorance, their letters, brought home to them the fundamentals of the revolution, and formed the Anti-Japanese Women's Association by involving them. Saying that in order for the women to be freed from rightlessness and inequality and achieve social emancipation they should turn out in the anti-Japanese revolutionary struggle led by Kim Il Sung, she ensured that they assisted the KPRA(Korean People's Revolutionary Army) in every way. Along with

this, she made sure that they played a big role in reconnoitering the enemy movements for successful military operations of the KPRA. Exploits of Kim Jong Suk and other women were permeated in the victorious Phochonbo Battle on June 4, 1937, which announced to the world that the Korean nation would not live as slaves of Japanese imperialism and would surely win back their country's independence by fighting Japanese imperialism.

In the early 1940s, when the military and political training for final battle for national liberation was underway, she stood in the van of such drills as parachuting, river-crossing and skiing, which even men soldiers found difficult, encouraging women guerrillas to gain excellent marks.

After the country's liberation(August 1945), she, while actively assisting Kim Il Sung in his work, motivated women to turn out in the effort for building a new society.

Just from the stage of formulating its programme after the country's liberation, the Korean women's movement encountered various assertions: some insisted that the theory of defending human rights and the programme advocated by women of the propertied class in the colonial era should be maintained, while some others maintained that the programme of proletarian women's emancipation advocated by the socialist women campaigners of the past should be copied mechanically. Having learned of this fact, she presented her view that the foremost task of the Democratic Women's Union of North Korea was to enlist women in the effort to found the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the major political task of the Workers' Party of Korea. She enlightened officials of the women's union, saying that the programme of the union should contain such issues as the

thorough liberation of women from the colonial and feudal exploitation, elevation of their political and economic positions, abolishing of the feudal evils of maltreating women and their emancipating from centuries-old ignorance and darkness. The first programme drawn up under her deep care won the unanimous approval at the First Conference of the DWUNK held in May 1946, and the Korean women and the DWUNK organizations were able to confidently advance with their clear objective.

Kim Jong Suk also paid her deep attention to building up the DWUNK and rallying the broad sections of women around it. She said to officials of the union that the DWUNK should be a political organization in which all Korean women, who loved the country, were rallied as one to strive for the building of a new country, adding that if women who accounted for half of the total population were united as one they could display their great strength. As a result, the union whose membership numbered 150 000 as of November 1945 increased to million by late 1946.

With a great importance attached to improving the women's political and ideological standards, she used to go deep among them to conduct the explanatory and publicity work.

She visited many factories, including the Pyongyang Cornstarch factory and the then Pyongyang Silk Mill, to arouse women in the efforts to build a new country. She took a lead in the Pothong River improvement project, the first nature-harnessing project in liberated Korea, with a pannier on her back, arousing women in the patriotic work and, through this, encouraging them to display their strength.

True to Kim Il Sung's instructions that it would be advisable for the

women's union to train women officials needed for nation building, she actively helped the work to set up a model technical school for training women officials and technicians. Thus competent women officials were trained in a short period in the liberated country to become pillars for the building of a new society.

The undying exploits she achieved for women's emancipation and the strengthening and development of the women's movement will shine forever with the history of ever-prospering socialist Korea.