

## **“Believe in People as in Heaven”**

This was the lifelong motto of President Kim Il Sung (April 15, 1912-July 8, 1994) of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea.

Still in his teens Kim Il Sung set out on the revolutionary struggle to save his country and people. He authored the Juche idea, an idea based on the principle that the masses of the people are the masters of the revolution and construction and they have the power to promote them. On the basis of this idea he drew on the inexhaustible strength of his people to lead the Korean revolution, prolonged and complicated, along the road of victory. He united them and mobilized them to the armed struggle against the Japanese imperialists, which was an arduous war spanning 15 years. Liberating Korea from their colonial rule on August 15, 1945, he built a country for the people that had been unseen in the 5 000-year-long history of the Korean nation. He had the state and government organs named after the people. Workers, peasants and intellectuals became deputies to the Supreme People’s Assembly (the Korean equivalent of parliament). The democratic reforms carried out just after the liberation, such as agrarian reform, enforcement of the law on sex equality and nationalization of major industries, were associated with Kim Il Sung’s intention to put forward his people as the masters of the country. As they were led by the leader who had full confidence in them regarding their strength as the greatest, the Korean people could win a victory over the US in the Korean war (1950-1953), the first defeat for the “strongest” nation of the world, and clear away the war debris to build a socialist country that is independent, self-supporting and self-reliant in national defence.

Kim Il Sung considered the people to be omnipotent beings and his teachers.

He would say to the officials: No being in the world is more powerful and resourceful than the masses of the people; one finds philosophy, economics, literature and all others among the people; when facing a knotty problem, one should go among the people and ask advice of them; their simple opinions contain all the principles of the world and the ways of advancing the revolution and overcoming the trials lying ahead.

He mixed with the people all his life, lending an ear to their opinions and reflecting their desires and aspirations in his policies. In his pocketbook were written the number of households in rural villages he visited, their grain yields, the annual output of chicken and eggs at a chicken farm, the opinion he received from a fisherman in a boat and the experience in third tilling he heard from a tractor driver on a paddy field. The contents of this pocketbook were basic references in his writing works and formulating lines and policies. In this sense he said that his ideology, philosophy and politics originated from the people.

His whole life brimmed over with boundless affection for the people and devotion to them. There are many moving anecdotes to illustrate this.

It happened after Korea's liberation when he visited the Songjin Steel Plant (the then name) on the east coast in the northern part of the country. Seeing the smelters working in front of a primitive furnace that had been built during the Japanese rule, he said that he would never allow the workers' lives to be traded for steel however precious it might be. He had the dangerous furnace, the only surviving furnace in the country, blown away.

When he learned that less than 200 households on the Osu Plain in the northwest of the country were suffering from shortage of drinking water, he had a huge fund expended to finance a project to draw water up from the Amnok River, scores of kilometres away.

Immediately after the liberation of the country he was faced with a lot of tasks for the building of a new country. But he set it as the top priority to realize the age-long desire of the people who wished their children would learn to their heart's content. So he had the pencil production discussed as an item of the agenda of the First Session of the Provisional People's Committee of North Korea.

In the heart of Pyongyang there was an empty location of fine scenery reserved for dozens of years. He had the Grand People's Study House built there to promote the intellectual development of students and working people.

The jewel-encrusted floor at the hall of the Pyongyang Maternity Hospital is also associated with his ardent affection for the people.

His career was replete with on-site guidance trips to where his people were. He went wherever they were, sometimes pushing his car when it got stuck on a muddy road. He was always seen among the people—in a damp pit, on a windy reclaimed land in the northern highlands of the country, on a reclaimed tidal flat and at a small shop in a remote mountain village.

Over 80 as he was, he visited farms time and again to make his people lead a happy life, until the last days of his life.

The units he visited from the year of liberation to the last year of his life add up to 20 600, the total distance topping 578 000km.

The benevolent image of President Kim Il Sung who devoted his whole life to the good of the people is lodged in the minds of the Korean people and progressive peoples of the world.