

# ANECDOTES OF KIM JONG IL'S LIFE

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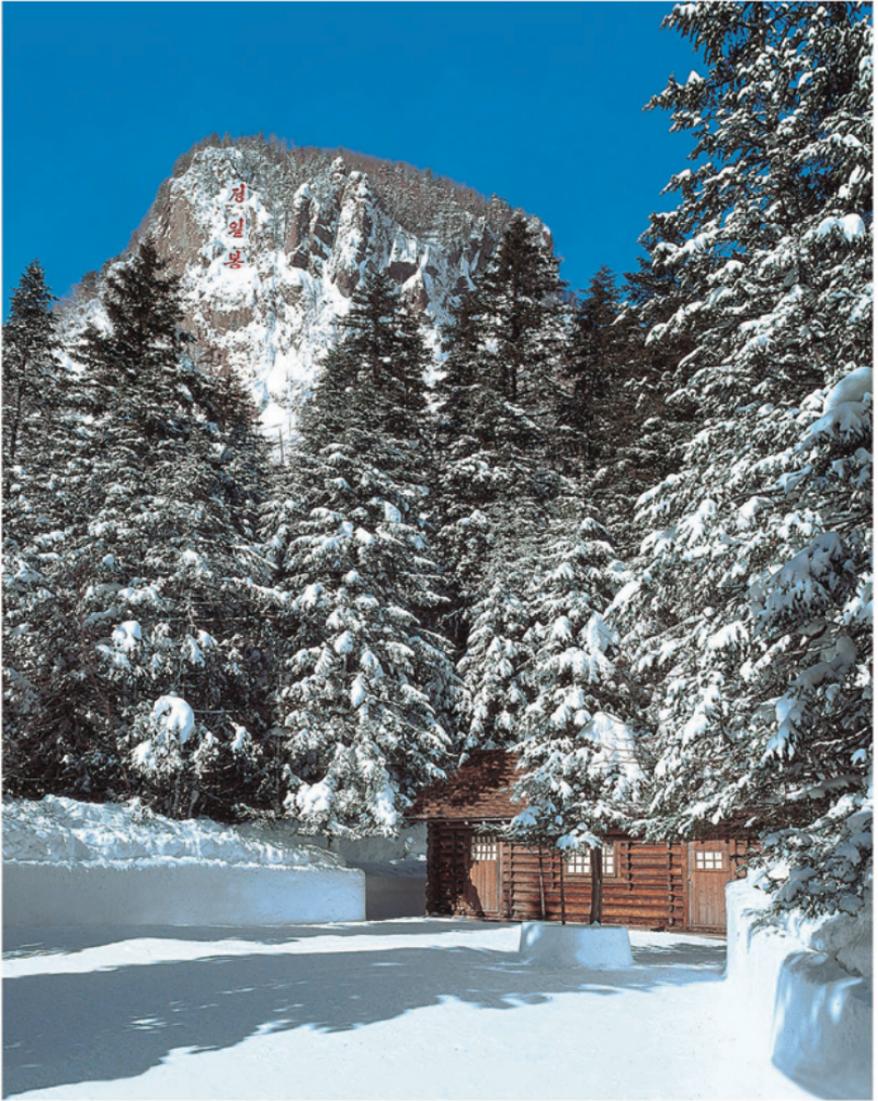


# **ANECDOTES OF KIM JONG IL'S LIFE**

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**Kim Jong Il's native home at the Paektusan Secret Camp**



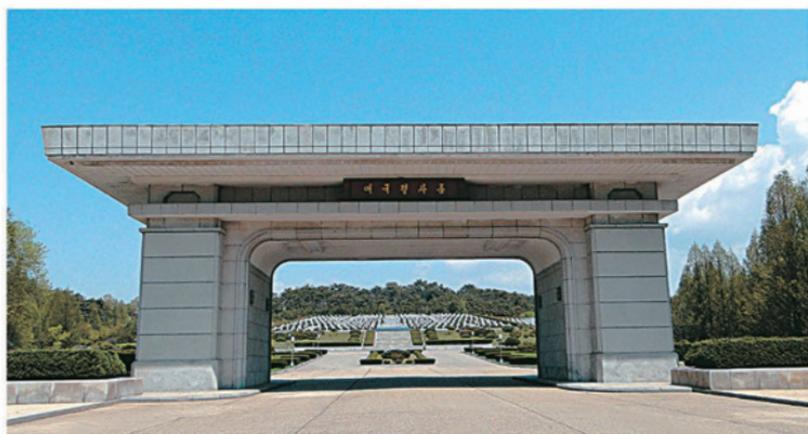
**Kim Jong Il in his days at Kim Il Sung University**



**Kim Jong Il goes down a pit on a man-trip during his on-site guidance at the Komdok Mine (July 1975)**



**Kim Jong Il tours the Patriotic Martyrs Cemetery (September 1998)**



**Archway to the Patriotic Martyrs Cemetery**

**Kim Jong Il pays tribute in front of the monument to Kim Il Sung's revolutionary activities on Mt. Jihye (April 1997)**



**Kim Jong Il inspects a KPA unit on Mt. Taedok (March 1996)**



**Kim Jong Il inspects the Panmunjom Mission of the KPA (November 1996)**



**Kim Jong Il receives south Korean president Kim Dae Jung who has come to Pyongyang for inter-Korean summit (June 2000)**



**Kim Jong Il shakes hands with Deng Yingchao,  
chair of the National Committee of the Chinese People's  
Political Consultative Conference (June 1983)**



**Kim Jong Il lays a wreath in front  
of the Lenin Mausoleum (August 2001)**



**Kim Jong Il visits  
a Russian Orthodox  
church in Khabarovsk**



**Kim Jong Il appreciates the Orlov stallions,  
a gift from President Vladimir Putin  
of the Russian Federation (February 2003)**



**Kim Jong Il meets Madeleine Albright,  
US Secretary of State (October 2000)**

## FOREWORD

Kim Jong Il was the leader of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) who enjoyed worldwide respect.

He was a genius of ideology and theory. He systematized and developed the Juche idea and the Songun idea—great ideologies guiding the era of independence. He founded the perfect answers to the theoretical and practical problems arising in carving out man's destiny, achieving the prosperity and development of a country and nation and building a beautiful future for mankind.

Under his unique leadership, his country was turned into one where all the people are united single-heartedly, which is unprecedented in the political history of the world, and into a socialist fortress, which no imperialist enemy, however formidable, dares to attack. The Korean people are now making dynamic efforts to open the gates of a thriving socialist country, which has strong national power, and in which everything prospers and the people live well with nothing to envy in the world.

Kim Jong Il's humanity, ennobling sense of moral obligation, outstanding wisdom and knowledge, iron-like faith and will, and unexcelled courage and mettle move the world's people.

Etched in the 70-year history of Kim Jong Il's life are legendary anecdotes that form a portrait of a great man.

This book contains some of these anecdotes.

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# **1. MYSTERY**

## **A Blessing from Heaven**

Kim Jong Il was born on Mt. Paektu, which was a base of the armed struggle that his father, Kim Il Sung, was leading against the Japanese military occupation. The day was February 16, 1942.

According to a study of the weather conditions in the Mt. Paektu area conducted by meteorologists and covering 100 years, there was something mysterious about the weather that day, as if it was a wonder from heaven.

According to the survey, the temperature was usually around 40°C below zero in mid-February accompanied by violent snowstorms in the Mt. Paektu area, the highest region in Korea.

February 15 that year was no exception.

However, the northwesterly wind gradually abated that night and by dawn had become a gentle breeze. And the temperature rose from 29°C below zero to 18°C below zero.

The sun shone brightly and the air was fresh.

It was as if heaven was blessing the birth of Kim Jong Il.

## **42 and Mt. Paektu**

Mt. Paektu is located at 42 degrees North Latitude.

Kim Jong Il was born in 1942.

There are too many significant facts associated with the mountain to say they are coincidental.

Since time immemorial the perennially snow-capped

mountain which, at 2 750 metres, is the highest mountain in Korea, has been regarded as the sacred mountain of the Korean nation. At the time of Kim Jong Il's birth the Headquarters of the Korean People's Revolutionary Army under the command of Kim Il Sung, which was waging an armed struggle to liberate Korea from the Japanese military occupation (1905-1945), was situated on the mountain.

For Kim Jong Il as he grew up, the gunshots of the anti-Japanese war were his lullaby. The first image he became acquainted with was that of his mother in military uniform, and his childhood friends were battle-hardened guerrillas. For him, rugged Mt. Paektu was his garden.

A saying has it that a man resembles his birthplace; it's true to say that Kim Jong Il resembled Mt. Paektu. The mountain fascinates people with its majestic appearance—the enormous lake at its summit and its chain of high peaks—and its mysterious natural phenomena, and these are symbolic of the traits and mettle of Kim Jong Il, who possesses a far-reaching ambition, outstanding wisdom, firm courage, strong willpower, great magnanimity and perfect leadership ability.

### **Mt. Paektu Recognizes Its Master**

The following happened when Kim Jong Il was once climbing Mt. Paektu.

The weather was miserable. It was difficult to open your eyes in the whirling blizzard, and the raging wind created snowdrifts that blocked the way.

His entourage tried to persuade him to turn back, saying that even if they managed to reach the summit they wouldn't be able to enjoy the view on such a day.

However, he continued to lead the way, saying that the

anti-Japanese revolutionary fighters had walked such paths in the past, and that the bad weather made it a true Mt. Paektu expedition.

Finally he and his entourage reached the summit.

With arms akimbo, he looked into the blinding snowstorm.

At that moment, there was a sudden, thunderous sound as if the ice was breaking on Lake Chon, and the furious blizzard stopped blowing. The clouds, which were drifting just above the ridges, gradually moved to one side, the sun shone, and a majestic snowscape revealed itself, with the snow-covered mountain ridges glimmering.

His entourage exclaimed at this mysterious revelation. With a smile on his face, Kim Jong Il said it seemed that Mt. Paektu recognized its master.

### **A Dense Fog Shrouds Panmunjom**

At dawn of one November day in 1996, Kim Jong Il arrived at Panmunjom, which lies on the Military Demarcation Line dividing the Korean peninsula into north and south.

It was remarkable that Kim Jong Il would go there, considering that a military stand-off between the DPRK and the United States had continued since the end of the Korean war in 1953 and that the US and south Korean forces committed frequent military provocations along the Military Demarcation Line.

As he and his entourage approached Panmunjom, a dense fog began to settle on the area.

The enemy always has its guns levelled at Panmunjom, yet while inspecting the area, he was at times no farther than 20-30 metres away from an enemy post. He stayed there for a long time, and all the while the dense fog held, enveloping him.

As he was leaving Panmunjom at the end of his inspection, the fog cleared all of a sudden.

The US and south Korean military authorities, when they later learned of his inspection, were struck dumb. A former Korean Armistice Commission Secretary of the UN Forces said to the delegates of the Korean People's Army:

“On the morning of November 27, when the news that your Supreme Commander had inspected Panmunjom was broadcast, my commander (commander of the US 8<sup>th</sup> Army) called me and reprimanded me, asking why I was ignorant of the fact even though I was in Panmunjom at the time. I said it was impossible to detect anything because of the dense fog. He could not say anything more. It seems your Supreme Commander used magic to summon the fog. It is very mysterious.”

### **“It’s Quite Strange”**

One May day in 2000, in a field in North Phyongan Province situated in the northwest of the country, Kim Jong Il was discussing farm work with some officials. When he spotted a tractor at the roadside, he walked towards it.

He asked the tractor driver to start the engine.

The driver climbed into the tractor through the left door, and almost at once the sound of the engine starting could be heard.

After listening to the engine, Kim Jong Il approached the right door of the driver's cab.

The tractor driver was embarrassed, knowing that the door was broken.

Kim Jong Il took the handle and pulled. The door, which the driver had previously been unable to open however hard he had tried, opened easily.

Kim Jong Il looked inside the cab for a moment and shut the door. He then told the driver he should keep his tractor in a good state of repair.

After he left the field, a crowd gathered around the tractor. People tried to open the cab's right door, thinking that it would be easy now that their leader had opened it. However, they were all unable to do so. They eventually succeeded in opening the door with the help of various tools.

Everyone commented how strange it was. It seemed that even a tractor recognized the great man.

### **Even the Weather Recognizes the Great Man**

During a visit to China in June 1983, Kim Jong Il went to Shanghai. Usually in Shanghai it rains every three days in summer; after the rain the sun beats down and it becomes sultry. For several days beforehand, it rained non-stop, accompanied by a typhoon. But a few hours before Kim Jong Il's arrival, it stopped raining, and the sun came out—although it was not as hot as usual. The weather remained fine throughout his stay in Shanghai.

In Qingdao which he was due to visit after Shanghai, it was quite foggy, but before his arrival the fog unexpectedly cleared. The local people said that even the weather recognized the great man.

In May 2010, during another visit to China, he went to Tianjin. The day before his arrival, it began to rain. But just as his train was pulling into Tianjin Railway Station, it stopped raining in the city centre. Yet the rain continued in the area of the port of Tianjin. Kim Jong Il was scheduled to visit the port. So the Chinese side made plans for him to make his tour by car. In the port authority building, Kim Jong Il was briefed on the port's history, its construction and its prospects. Just as he was about to make for the wharves, the rain stopped. The Chinese officials who were accompanying him were surprised, and also thought it fortunate that he didn't have to see the wharves from inside a car. It took him

about 40 minutes to inspect two wharves. In the meantime, the rain continued to fall out at sea, but not on Kim Jong Il's route. However, no sooner had Kim Jong Il wound up his tour and got in his car than it began to bucket down again. The Chinese people who witnessed all this called it a unique phenomenon that could only be explained as a wonder of heaven. "The Korean leader Kim Jong Il," they said, "is truly a man sent by heaven."

### **The Man Who Brings Sunshine**

#### *Kim Jong Il Stops a Storm.*

This is the title of an article carried in the Russian newspaper *Trud*, dated August 24, 2002.

The previous day, when Kim Jong Il was staying in Vladivostok while on a visit to the Russian Far East, a temperate low-pressure storm blew two times. But by the next day, when he was meeting Russian President Vladimir Putin, the storm had stopped. The previous year, when he was visiting St. Petersburg, storm-clouds that had been gathering near the city, cleared away.

The Russian newspaper *Komsomolskaya Pravda* once carried an article, under the headline: *Comrade Kim Jong Il Tames the Weather*, which reads in part:

Early in the morning of July 26, 2001, as the train carrying the Korean leader was approaching the border railway station at Khasan, the fog was so dense that it was difficult to see an inch in front of you. But when the train pulled into the station, it became clear and bright, and the sun beat down.

The same thing happened in Novosibirsk and Omsk, when his train was travelling to Moscow.

In Russia, people began calling the Korean leader, the man who brings sunshine.

## 2. WISDOM

### **An Answer from Kim Jong Il**

The following happened one October day in 1955, when Kim Jong Il was studying at Pyongyang Secondary School No. 1.

During a world history lesson, the teacher described war as an art.

Before he could conclude the lesson, one student asked, “Sir, what do you mean by saying that war is an art?”

The teacher hesitated. Eventually he said he would give the answer in the next lesson.

During the break, the students as usual asked Kim Jong Il for his answer.

Kim Jong Il used an allegory, saying that war was like a symphony orchestra.

A symphony orchestra is an ensemble combining a high level of organization and precision, delicate harmonies, and maximum passion and tension. War is an ensemble of human and material resources and mental forces; it requires strategies and tactics that are clearly and subtly formulated, and demands that the latest developments in science and technology be enlisted. What is important is that all these elements must be dovetailed to the minutest detail. If a link in the chain is broken, then the war may well be lost. In this sense, war is called an art. Hence the phrase *military art*.

Kim Jong Il added that leader Kim Il Sung had developed original military strategies and tactics while leading the anti-Japanese armed struggle and the Fatherland Liberation War

(Korean war in the 1950s) to victory, and that they constitute an outstanding military art unprecedented in the world history of war.

The whole class applauded his answer.

### **A One-Century-Old Contradictory Point**

This happened one September day in 1960, less than one month after Kim Jong Il entered Kim Il Sung University.

That afternoon Kim Jong Il called at the department of political economy. After greeting the teachers, he said he had come to speak his own opinion of the teaching materials.

He said the subject treated the productive forces as an ensemble of the labour force of man and means of production.

As it was a one-century-old theory and a widely accepted knowledge among specialists in political economy, the teachers nodded their heads in the affirmative.

Saying that it then meant the productive forces consisted even of the objects of labour, he asked them if it was not right to see that productive forces were composed of labour force and means of production. What he meant was that the objects of labour could not be part of the productive forces.

The young, promising teachers as well as the veteran professor who had devoted himself to the study of political economy were struck dumb, for Kim Jong Il was pinpointing a contradictory point of the theory, which had been accepted for a century after the birth of the discipline political economy.

One teacher explained, saying that it was quoted from Marx's theory of economy and that there was an argument over it in the academic circles. But it was none other than an excuse.

Kim Jong Il expanded on his opinion:

President Kim Il Sung said that productive forces can be

likened to the forces of the army, adding that weaponry and men who handled them consisted of the armed forces. If the armed forces are composed of weaponry and soldiers, it is self-evident that the productive forces consist of men and means of production.

### **Juche Philosophy and Human Philosophy**

One April day in 1974, Kim Jong Il was discussing the Juche philosophy with a group of officials.

In those days, some social scientists viewed the Juche philosophy as a type of human philosophy.

Commenting on this error, Kim Jong Il said:

**“Human philosophy is long standing and has had many schools from the outset, but they all deal purely with the human question. Human philosophy is a philosophy of life which denies the inherent mission of philosophy as a science that gives an outlook on the world and mainly interprets what man and life are.**

**“The Juche philosophy is different. It raises man’s position and role in the world as the fundamental question of philosophy and elucidates the philosophical principle that man is the master of everything and decides everything. The fundamental question of Juche philosophy does not purely concern the human question, but the relations between man and the world; the principle of Juche philosophy does not merely represent an outlook on human life, but an outlook on the world. The Juche philosophy expounds a man-centred, Juche-oriented outlook on the world.”**

Stressing that the Juche philosophy views man from a different angle to that of the preceding philosophical schools, Kim Jong Il went on:

The Marxist classics defined the essence of man as the ensemble of social relations. This represented a major advance in giving a philosophical elucidation of the nature of man. But they failed to give a full account of the essential features of man as dominator and transformer of nature and society. The Juche philosophy made it clear for the first time that independence, creativity and consciousness are the essential features of man, a social being, and thus provided a perfect conception of man and a correct philosophical explanation of his position and role.

Looking round at the officials, Kim Jong Il said confidently, **“The Juche philosophy newly elucidated the essential features of man and his position and role as dominator and transformer of the world and thus raised his dignity and value to the highest level possible. This is the greatest achievement of the Juche philosophy that no other philosophical thoughts have accomplished.”**

### **A Seagull Caught Alive**

The following happened one day in August 1967 when Kim Jong Il was on his way to give on-site guidance in South Hamgyong Province, in the eastern part of Korea. His car was passing a mountain spur on the east coast, when he told his driver to stop for a short break.

He gazed at the seagulls hovering over the billowing sea for a while, and then asked his entourage if there was a way of catching a seagull.

An official said there was.

**“How?”** he asked.

“With a rifle,” the official answered.

**“With a rifle? The easiest way, but... .”** He trailed off.

After a moment he said that he needed a live seagull, and not one wounded by a bullet.

The officials accompanying him wondered why he needed a live seagull.

He said to them: A few days ago I visited Hamhung Zoo in the South Hamgyong provincial capital; there were many visitors, but not so many animals. Although the seagull is not a rare bird, I want to send a live one to the zoo as a memento of my recent visit.

The officials wracked their brains. Eventually one of them came up with a solution, using a rifle.

With a smile on his face, Kim Jong Il said he was of the same opinion.

*How could he possibly catch a seagull alive?* wondered the officials.

He explained to them: In general, birds are cowardly creatures and so fearful that they cannot fly off immediately after being scratched by a bullet; the way to catch them alive is to exploit this weakness.

Knowing that he was a fine marksman, the officials urged him to shoot.

Loading a rifle, he approached a cliff where some seagulls were sitting.

But the seagulls flew away.

Saying he would have to take a long shot, he fired at some seagulls sitting on a distant cliff. The seagulls flew off—all except one which fell back onto the cliff.

Cheering, the officials ran to the cliff and fetched the large seagull.

Kim Jong Il examined the wings and legs and felt the feathers to find out where it was wounded.

It had a slight scratch from a fragment of a rock that had been blown off by the bullet.

He told the officials to send the seagull to Hamhung Zoo.

## **Profound Knowledge of Poultry**

One September day in 1967 Kim Jong Il visited a chicken farm.

Some chickens were playing in the recreation area while others were laying eggs in the coops, which were equipped with automatic doors.

An official reported that they were the first batch of fattening chickens that had been hatched from eggs sent to the farm by Kim Il Sung. Kim Jong Il, with a satisfactory eye on the plump chickens, praised the farm for having raised the chickens well. Then he looked more closely at one chicken before asking, **“Is that a fattener, too? That one pecking nervously at the feed.”**

The officials looked in the direction to which he was pointing, and saw a chicken fussing over its feed.

He asked if a laying chicken had got mixed with the fatteners.

No one answered.

With a slight smile on his face, he said, **“Fatteners are calm and never fuss, but laying chickens are nervous by nature.”**

Then he commented that it must be an excellent layer.

An official caught the chicken, and examined it. Kim Jong Il was right.

Even the breeders, who observed and examined the chickens every day to prevent ones with different characters mixing, had failed to notice the chicken. However, Kim Jong Il had noticed the laying chicken among the thousands of similar-looking fatteners at first glance.

## **Song Sung in Three Languages**

In June 1971 when preparations were under way in Korea for a performance in honour of the Sixth Congress of the League of

Socialist Working Youth (today the Kim Il Sung Socialist Youth League), Kim Jong Il summoned a musical director.

He told him that he had heard that Korean songs had been selected for the performance, and asked if there were any plans to include foreign songs.

The musical director could not answer him, as he had no such plans.

Kim Jong Il said that, since many foreign delegations and delegates would be participating in the congress it would be good to perform *Song of the World Democratic Youth*, which all the participants were likely to know. He also suggested that the three verses of the song could be sung in three foreign languages—English, French and Spanish.

The performance was held in the presence of Kim Il Sung.

Women singers from Korea sang the three verses of *Song of the World Democratic Youth* in English, French and Spanish; the English-speaking young people joined them for the first verse, the French-speaking ones for the second verse and the Spanish-speaking ones for the third verse.

When the song was over, all the participants called for an encore.

The singers repeated the song, and the same thing happened.

The song sung in different languages added to the political significance of the congress.

### **A New Form of Novels: A Cycle**

The cycle of novels, *Immortal History*, covers the history of Kim Il Sung's revolutionary activities in a comprehensive and systematic way. The cycle is permeated with Kim Jong Il's wisdom.

Korea's novelists wracked their brains for a form with which to

portray the breadth and depth of Kim Il Sung's revolutionary career.

One August day in 1971, when he met an official, Kim Jong Il said:

It would be quite impossible to depict Kim Il Sung's revolutionary career in a few novels. It would be a good idea to cover it in novels under different titles by dividing it according to periods, or in numbered novels with the same title. However, in view of the greatness of the history and magnitude of its content, I think the form of a cycle would be best. In the cycle each novel would be independent and yet consistent with the rest of the cycle.

The official was reminded of some well-known cycles of novels such as Honore de Balzac's *Human Comedy*, consisting of 90 novels, and Emile Zola's *Les Rougen-Macquart* of 20 novels.

Kim Jong Il explained that nowhere in the world had a leader of the working class been described in the form of large-scale literary works. So, the problem demanded fresh solutions. He said:

**“Kim Il Sung's glorious revolutionary career should be covered in the form of a cycle of a Korean style. This is the only way to depict it comprehensively, systematically and profoundly, and every novel in the cycle should exert a literary effect through its specific characteristics as a novel.**

**“I think that *Immortal History* would be the ideal title for a cycle covering the President's career.”**

### Pianoforte

One March day in 2005 Kim Jong Il watched a performance by the State Merited Chorus.

When the performance was over, he commented that the piano had been too quiet to support the chorus. He then asked the

conductor what the meaning of the word piano was.

The conductor answered that its original name was pianoforte, meaning soft and loud. Kim Jong Il agreed with him and said that in the day's performance the piano had sounded only piano, but not forte; he asked where the forte had been.

Embarrassed, the conductor could not answer.

With a gentle smile on his face, Kim Jong Il continued:

I realized in the first item in the programme that you were restraining the accompaniment. You apparently did so because you thought that the piano, if it was too loud, would drown the chorus. You failed to take into account the fact that if the piano accompaniment is restrained, the characteristics of the songs could not be sustained and the intervals would be awkward. But a conductor should be prudent in directing the representation of songs, after carefully studying them from various angles.

His analysis and judgement were correct. The conductor had stressed the representation of the songs and demanded that the pianist lower the volume of the piano so as to subordinate the accompaniment to the songs.

Kim Jong Il gave detailed instructions on applying concords, rhythms and various other depiction techniques to a piano accompaniment. Then he told the conductor to improve the accompaniment by restoring the forte.

Later, he saw the performance again.

The performance, with the improved accompaniment, was a great success.

### **Wise Predictions**

On the night of October 20, 1979, Kim Jong Il was talking to a group of officials. He was analyzing the discord within the Park Jung Hee regime and the struggle of the south Korean people

against the Yushin dictatorship. He commented that the Park regime had a limited life.

The officials looked at one another in disbelief. The Park regime backed by the United States appeared to them to be very strong.

So, Kim Jong Il explained:

**“In view of the acute contradictions and the developments in south Korea, something shocking is likely to happen. Park’s Yushin dictatorship seems to be approaching its Waterloo; the United States may even decide to remove its stooge.”**

Six days later, Park Jung Hee was shot dead. The assassination was secretly planned by the CIA, yet Kim Jong Il had been able to predict the plot.

There are other examples of the accuracy of his predictions.

One November day in 1987, Kim Jong Il, in a talk with officials, expressed his view that the Soviet Union would reap a whirlwind from its “restructuring.”

Something would happen in the Soviet Union in the next few years if it continued to follow this road, he said. It seems to me, he continued, that the flag of socialism may be hauled down in that country, followed by a capitalist wind sweeping across it. Then the country’s complex ethnic mix will become an issue.

When the Gulf War broke out in January 1991, many people guessed, in view of Saddam Hussein’s grip on power, that the Iraqi army would not yield easily. However, Kim Jong Il predicted that the country would surrender within a few weeks.

### **Who Is a Celebrated General?**

Historians have written that a celebrated general is someone who defeats a more powerful enemy by dint of outstanding courage and brilliant tactics.

A veteran senior diplomat who had read the biographies of almost all the world's famous generals, questioned the accuracy of the accepted definition. He wondered; *Who is a celebrated general in the true sense of the term?*

One June day in 1985, when he met Kim Jong Il, he told him about his doubts.

Kim Jong Il said that different people might have different opinions, and asked him what he thought.

The official answered that he could not discern who were the greatest generals, as historians could not agree—some put forward three most famous generals, others seven and still some others ten. Then he counted the biographies he had read those of—Alexander the Great, Hannibal, Caesar, Spartacus, Napoleon, Kutuzov, Genghis Khan, Zhuge Liang, Zhukov, Stalin and others.

With a smile on his face, Kim Jong Il said:

Beethoven created the famous *Symphony No. 3*, which he dedicated to Napoleon as a hero fighting for human rights and democracy. However, when he came to realize that Napoleon was a tyrant with the ambition of becoming emperor, he erased the name of Napoleon from the title of the symphony, saying that Napoleon, too, was a nobody. The story of how the symphony *Eroica* was created shows that people do not agree with historians when they describe this man as a hero and that as a celebrated general. No matter how courageous and brave they were, ambitious careerists, tyrants and aggressors who sought continental or world conquest were inevitably forsaken by people.

Then, who can be called a celebrated general?

To this question, Kim Jong Il answered:

**“Celebrated generals are those who achieved historic successes in just wars for realizing the independence of the masses of the people and those who live forever in people’s memory for the exploits they performed in the shaping of the destiny of their countries and nations.”**

The official asked Kim Jong Il which qualities of well-known generals he set the greatest store by.

**“That is a more difficult question,”** he said, smiling.

He gave his opinions of some world-famous generals, including Spartacus, leader of the Gladiatorial Revolt, Kutuzov who defeated Napoleon, Zhukov who was Marshal of the Soviet Union and a four-time Hero, and Generalissimo Stalin, and then continued:

**“I think that the qualities a famous general must have are outstanding wisdom and tactics, strong faith and will, peerless courage and mettle, and burning passion and benevolence. In other words, a general can be called a general in the true sense of the word when he wins victory on the strength of his ideology, faith and will, courage and mettle, passion and benevolence.”**

### **A New Understanding of May Day**

The Inaugural Congress of the Second International held in Paris in July 1889 adopted a decision on commemorating May 1, the day in 1886 when workers in Chicago, the United States, staged a demonstration demanding an 8-hour working day, as the day of the working class of the whole world. More than 100 years had passed, yet no one had ever questioned the day’s name.

On May 1, 2006, Kim Jong Il, during talks with officials, said that until then May Day had been called the day of the working class of the whole world, but that it was time to have a new understanding of the day.

Looking at the officials, who apparently failed to understand him, he said:

May Day came into being as the day for demonstrating the militant power and revolutionary unity of the working class in the

struggle against the oppression and exploitation of capital and for the right for existence and democratic freedom. Today it could not be called the day merely of the working class.

Then he explained his argument.

In the present IT era, when science and technology are developing at an exponential speed, the workers are being intellectualized and their work is being done on a more technical and intellectual basis to an extent that would have been unimaginable in the past. As the number of workers engaged in mental labour has drastically increased, both workers and intellectuals have become working people who are engaged in technical and mental labour. In view of such changes in the circumstances of the times and the actual conditions, it is not necessary to dogmatically regard May Day as the day merely of the working class.

His logical and reasonable argument brought home to the officials how the position of the working class and social and class relations had changed and how the working class in the era of the manufacturing industry was different from that of the IT era.

He continued:

May Day must be the day of the working people of the whole world. The category of *working people* includes workers, peasants and intellectuals. To call May Day the day of the workers of the whole world does not suit the character of our Party. Ours is a mass-based party formed of the advanced members of the working class, peasantry and intelligentsia. If we call May Day a day merely of the workers, we are apparently diminishing the mass character of our Party. Since the title of our Party's theoretical magazine is *Kulloja* (working people), it would be good to call May Day the day of the working people in view of the revolutionary and mass character of the Party. It is also advisable to change the slogan "Workers of the whole world, unite!" into "Working people of the whole world, unite!"

## Unique Style of Writing

One October day in 1988, an official who was touring Pyongyang in the company of Kim Jong Il, broached the subject of the latter's unique style of writing.

As a young man, the official had read several classics written by philosophers. However, the style was invariably complex and the logic intricate. All in all, they were difficult to understand.

On the contrary, he could understand Kim Jong Il's works at the first reading; at the second reading he had been struck with wonder at the profundity of their meaning. His works were characterized by clear arguments, pure logic, lucid theory, plain language and kindness to the reader. Of particular note was his ability to express a great idea in a condensed way. While Stalin synthesized the revolutionary ideas of Lenin in the 246-page *Problems of Leninism*, Kim Jong Il crystallized the revolutionary ideas of President Kim Il Sung in the 86-page *On the Juche Idea*. As he had the ability to express his thoughts in a condensed way, his statements, reports and discourses were simple and yet profound in their philosophical meaning.

Kim Jong Il, insisting that he did not deserve his praise, said:

**“Whenever I write, I regard as my guiding principles profound thought in short sentences and an explicit message with simple expressions.”**

## Bells of an Orthodox Church Ring

In August 2002, Kim Jong Il paid a visit to the Russian Far East.

When his train was approaching Khabarovsk, he said he wanted

to visit St. Bishop Innokenty of Irkutsk Church, a Russian Orthodox church.

Surprised, the officials accompanying him said, “Only religious believers go there.”

Kim Jong Il responded:

Although I am not a believer, I am going to visit it because religion is also an object of politics. There is nothing wrong with us visiting a church, when the Russians are Orthodox Christians. We must never be narrow-minded but respect the customs of other nations. If we visit the church, we will better understand the traditions of the Russian people and their thoughts, aspirations and wishes, and feel closer to the 60 million members of the Orthodox Church.

He explained that a politician ought to have a deep knowledge of religion, and told them about the origins of the Russian Orthodox Church and the history of its development. The Russian Orthodox Church, he said, is recognized as the biggest of the world’s 15 orthodox churches and exerts a considerable influence on state policy in Russia.

At the church, he looked round the area. Suddenly the bells began to ring, deep and solemn.

Everyone looked in the direction from which the sound of the bells was coming.

Pointing to the bell tower, the church superior said that the bell ringers were ringing the bells to welcome Kim Jong Il. He explained that nobody was entitled to ring the bells apart from graduates of the bell-ringing school, and that those who were now ringing the bells were the best ringers at the church.

It was a strict convention of the Russian Orthodox Church to ring the bells at noon, but the church had broken that convention.

“As the Sun has descended to our church, it is quite natural to ring the bells,” he said, putting his hands on his chest and then spreading his arms upward as if cheering.

## Sun and Glow

When a statue of President Kim Il Sung was to be erected in the entrance hall of the Kumsusan Memorial Palace, where he lies in his lifetime appearance, there was much debate among the designers and sculptors concerning the background of the statue. Some suggested a panorama of Pyongyang, others the mysterious scenery of Lake Chon at the summit of Mt. Paektu, and still others the beautiful landscape of Mangyongdae.

However, they all came to the conclusion that no drawing was appropriate for the background of the statue.

Then, what was the solution? After much discussion, they agreed on a white marble background.

One January day in 1995, Kim Jong Il visited the Kumsusan Memorial Palace. After examining the design, he said that if the back wall was covered with stone, the hall might give the impression of the interior of a fortress, especially since the other three walls and the floor were also covered with stone.

Then he was lost in thought for a while, before saying: The background should be arranged in such a way that the back wall is coated with white resin and a morning glow is depicted using lighting effects; then the background will set off the solemnity and magnificence of the President's statue.

“Sun and morning glow!” all around him exclaimed.

The background created in that way was quite wonderful. After visiting the Kumsusan Memorial Palace Vladimir Tolstikov, a prominent Russian, said, “When I paid tribute to Kim Il Sung before his statue, I was deeply impressed by the morning glow in the background. As a glow is cast by the sun, it is quite natural that there should be a glow where there is the sun.”

## **Infinity**

The following happened to an ordinary family in Korea.

When the youngest son, a first-year pupil at primary school, got up one morning, he turned the pages of a calendar hanging on the wall. However, he stopped on the page for July. Tears welled up in his eyes. The eighth day was framed in black.

He took a knife out of his bag and started to scratch the black frame away.

Surprised, his father asked him what was the matter. The son answered in a tearful voice, "Something is wrong with this calendar. The eighth day is framed in black, although Generalissimo Kim Il Sung isn't dead. There should be only the day of his birth, but not the day of his death."

Kim Jong Il, when he was told about this, thought deeply for a while before saying in a husky voice that the people sincerely wished President Kim Il Sung to be immortal and that July 8 should no longer be framed in black.

Some days later Kim Jong Il commented that the figure 8, if written sideways, becomes  $\infty$ , the sign of infinity.

Everyone who heard him was filled with admiration.

Ever since the death of the President, eight had been regarded in Korea as a sign of grief. But now it had suddenly become the sign of infinity.

Presently, he said that he was determined to ensure that the revolutionary career of the President would continue for all eternity.

## **A Puzzle Solved**

In October 2000, Madeleine Albright, Secretary of State of the United States, visited Korea.

At a banquet attended by Kim Jong Il, she set a puzzle to the participants. How was it possible to make 16 with your ten fingers?

A deep silence fell over the banquet hall.

The silence was broken by Kim Jong Il, who came up with the solution. Saying that it was quite easy, he extended his ten fingers with both thumbs overlapped to form a cross, expressing  $4 \times 4$ .

All looked at him in admiration. Albright was the first to clap her hands.

### **Admiration of Scientists**

During his visit to Russia in the summer of 2001, Kim Jong Il visited the Siberian branch of the Russian Academy of Sciences.

Guided by the branch director, he examined a board with diagrams providing a visual depiction of the successes achieved by the branch. After comparing the guide's explanation with the graphs and going over the many numerical values, symbols and formulas, he nodded. Pointing to the curved lines in the graphs, he said that the almost equal standard values and measurement values showed that the results of the research were quite good. The guide then led him to a chart beside the graphs and began to explain it.

After hearing a few words, Kim Jong Il said that would do, and he would move on to something else.

A look of doubt crossed the guide's face. But Kim Jong Il said there was no need for him to explain the chart, which described the graphs, since he could understand it without any explanation.

The following happened when he visited the Khrunichev State Space Centre. While examining the research equipment at the centre, Kim Jong Il asked the guide whether he was looking at the space station Mir. The guide replied that he was.

After a glance at the station's exterior, Kim Jong Il proposed to the guide that they should get inside. The space station Mir, a

crystallization of cutting-edge space science and technology, had been Russia's pride for many years. So, the space centre authorities had specially selected a top expert to explain the station to Kim Jong Il.

After looking around the interior of the station and before the guide began his explanation, Kim Jong Il nodded in acknowledgement. He himself explained the interior, pointing in turn to the flight control panel, the crew's living quarters, the docking port and the airlock for spacewalks.

A Russian scientist said later, "I already knew that Kim Jong Il was a man with encyclopaedic knowledge. But I did not know that he was so well informed about space science. He is a real genius."

### 3. DEVOTION

#### Unaware of a Thunderstorm

Between May 1966 and July 1969, Kim Jong Il conducted a comprehensive study and analysis of 31 major works by Marx, Engels and Lenin.

Recollecting those days, Kim Jong Il said, **“At that time I read and debated until my eyes became bloodshot and my voice hoarse. But I shall never forget those days of reading and studying.”**

One day Kim Jong Il and a group of officials were reading a classic work, which he planned to discuss with them a few days later. Since noon dark clouds had been gathering outside and it began to rain heavily, accompanied by a violent thunderstorm and lightning. But Kim Jong Il was unaware of all this; instead his eyes were glued to the pages of the book. Towards sunset he raised his eyes and looked out.

**“When did it begin to rain?”** he asked.

“It’s been raining since noon. There was even a thunderstorm,” answered one of the officials.

**“Is that so? I was so engrossed in reading that I was unaware what was happening. Anyhow, it was a worthwhile day. I finished reading this book in the course of the afternoon.”**

A bright smile spread over his face.

#### At an Angling Spot near Mupho

In September 1971 Kim Jong Il, with some officials, was looking round the Mupho site where Kim Il Sung had set up a

bivouac during the anti-Japanese revolutionary struggle.

One day an official proposed that they go fishing in the Tuman River, which is teeming with chars where it flows near Mupho.

Kim Jong Il accepted the proposal.

While the officials were catching fish, Kim Jong Il was lost in thought, his fishing line drooping in the water. Time passed, but he remained in the same posture. An official tiptoed towards him. He noticed that, although a fish had taken the bait, Kim Jong Il was unaware of it. After a while Kim Jong Il became aware of the official. He said that Mupho was really picturesque, and that sitting there with the fishing line in the water, an idea had flashed into his mind. The official realized that their attempt to get him to rest by taking him fishing had not worked.

Kim Jong Il continued: This river and the forest around here are associated with the glorious career of President Kim Il Sung. No leader in the world has led the revolution and trod such a rugged path as our President did. As the song goes, he is a legendary hero endowed with the spirit of Mt. Paektu and the greatest of all the great men in modern history. His revolutionary ideas far excel the preceding ideas in their depth and breadth, and his revolutionary career is an immortal heroic epic. However, we have failed to clarify the position his revolutionary ideas occupy in world history. His great Juche idea has a powerful appeal to billions of people across the world, but we have so far failed to formulate his revolutionary ideas.

Then he said to himself, **“Kimilsungism!...”**

**“Just as the flow of the Tuman is eternal, so Kimilsungism will shine as the brilliant banner of the people in their struggle even in the future communist society as it does in the contemporary times,”** he declared.

## The 3-Dimensional Use of Time

One March day in 1987, an official went to the office of Kim Jong Il, bringing a document the latter had asked for. He found Kim Jong Il writing. Shortly after he entered the office, the phone rang. Motioning to the official to take a seat, Kim Jong Il told him to wait a moment. After hanging up, he asked the official to read the document, and resumed writing.

The document was an important report on the international situation. So the official remained silent in his chair, waiting for him to finish writing.

**“I’m all right. Please read it,”** he said to the official, without lifting his eyes.

The official stood up and started to read. At one moment Kim Jong Il said that he had already known what he was being told, and at another moment he asked the date of the information, analyzing and assessing the various items of information. He was writing all the time.

Writing a speech and analyzing a situation report are both intellectually demanding. It is next to impossible to write and talk about different things at the same time, especially when one is engaged in writing something important, as Kim Jong Il was. Yet he was writing a report on intensifying ideological education.

## Saving Time

One day a senior official from the Central Committee of the Workers’ Party of Korea wrote to Kim Jong Il.

The letter read:

“Dear Kim Jong Il,

“When I returned to my office after attending the opening ceremony of the International Cinema House, I found that you had already ratified the documents that my department sent you this morning, as well as that I gave you at dawn today when we were leaving Kangwon Province.

“I was so surprised. I wondered how you could possibly find the time to examine and ratify the documents. When we were leaving Kangwon Province at dawn, you said you would take a wink of sleep in the car. And when you arrived in Pyongyang this morning, you must have attended the opening ceremony of the International Cinema House straight after having your breakfast.

“I can’t imagine how you were able to find the time. As for me, after I left Kangwon Province with you, I slept in my car. When I got home, I changed clothes and had breakfast. I did not even have the time to inform my secretary of my arrival. Now I feel guilty, seeing the documents you have signed. How did you find the time to ratify the three documents? I don’t know. Please, send me the answer.”

It was May 1989. Four days later, Kim Jong Il said to the official:

**“You needn’t wonder how I could find the time to go through the documents and ratify them. I have a lot of work to do, haven’t I?”**

Then he continued:

When I arrived at my office that morning, I found a mountain of documents on my desk. So, as soon as I entered my office, I started to read them, and after I had gone through them, I found it was nearly time for the ceremony. I grabbed a piece of bread and a glass of water for my breakfast. When I was about to leave my office, someone brought me a document, saying it was an urgent one. I went through it while going downstairs, without stopping to change my clothes. I wonder if what I said could be the answer to your puzzle.

With a serious look, the official said, “You are not just an individual; you embody the country and the Party. I will raise the matter of you missing breakfast at the next session of the Political Bureau.”

**“Oh, will you really go public with something I confided in you? Do it if you want. But, look. If anyone tells you a personal secret, aren’t you under an obligation to keep it to yourself?”** he countered, and then went on:

I am not so constituted as to put aside something I have to do today. It is not in me to leave even one document on my desk. As I am also a man, sometimes I feel hungry and tired, too. When I am tired, I also have to go to sleep. However, I am not in a position to sleep whenever I’m tired.

### **Visiting a Dangerous Mine Pit**

On July 1, 1975, Kim Jong Il visited the Komdok Mine in order to give encouragement to the miners.

The mine is situated at the foot of Machon Pass, which is so steep and rough that, according to legend, a general on horse-back had to bend down so that his helmet did not scrape the sky.

As soon as he alighted from his train, Kim Jong Il met the management officials and familiarized himself with the situation at the mine. Then he made for an ore-dressing plant and gave a pep talk to the workers there. After that he turned towards a pit. The management officials, his entourage and members of a travelling art propagation team tried hard to dissuade him from going down the pit. But he dug his heels in, and said:

Why can’t I go down there, when President Kim Il Sung has done so before and the miners are working there? If I am to stay on the surface, what is the point of my visit? We must go anywhere, no matter how distant or rough, if it is somewhere our precious workers are working. I have come to see the workers, but if I return

without meeting them at their workplace, they will be sorely disappointed. So let us go down.

He put on a safety helmet and got on the mantrip. When he reached the mine face, the exultant miners rushed to greet him, cheering. Climbing out of the mantrip, he shook their hands and inquired about their health.

“That you should come into this dangerous pit!” exclaimed an old miner, with feeling. Grasping him by the hand, Kim Jong Il said, **“I’ve been anxious to meet you miners.”**

### **A New Mountaineering Route**

In May 1981 Kim Jong Il, determined to open up a new tourist route, climbed Mt. Myohyang, leading an expeditionary party made up of senior officials from the central organs.

An official who had been appointed the guide told Kim Jong Il that the path was steep. But Kim Jong Il led from the front, replying that mountaineering was more rewarding if it was a challenge.

When the party reached the Murung Falls, it suddenly got dark and threatened rain.

The officials urged him to turn back, since he had already identified the tourist route. However, he picked up the pace, insisting that, though it was cloudy, they should still get to the top.

After admiring the view at the Eight Pools and crossing a rickety suspension bridge, he arrived at a stream beside the Yuson Falls. It began to rain.

A rock blocked the path ahead which was so narrow and slippery with rain that they had to crawl under the rock. Moreover, on the far side there was another rock which was so cracked that it seemed it would fall on them at any moment.

The officials blocked his way, insisting that he should turn back.

Kim Jong Il said with a smile:

Why are you making such a fuss about the weather? Since you are on a mountain, you should be prepared to get soaked by the rain. Crawling under a rock is something everyone should try. I understand that you are concerned about my safety. But we should go on. We aren't here for recreation. By climbing the mountain in this foul weather, we can really get to know the tourist route.

When the party got to the Pison Falls, it stopped raining and a beautiful rainbow could be seen against the falls.

That day, after listening to the officials' impression of mountaineering, Kim Jong Il gave detailed instructions on setting out the tourist route so that it was safe and more convenient, warning that inadequate safety measures on such a steep route might give rise to accidents.

### **151 Bends on Mt. Osong**

One August day in 1998 Kim Jong Il was visiting a frontline unit of the Korean People's Army stationed on Mt. Osong, 1 000 m above sea level. The mountain has steep cliffs and deep valleys.

An enemy post was only a stone's throw away.

He was about to make his way to the unit, when the officials accompanying him requested him not to do so, saying, "Supreme Commander, the path was washed away in several places by heavy rain. So, delay your plan until it is repaired. Please do as we ask, just this once."

Turning his eyes away from their entreating faces, he looked up the dizzy mountain path.

Thanking them, he refused their entreaty and got into his car, saying that he could not turn back because his soldiers were at the post and he had to experience the challenges of the rough road to the front line in such bad weather if he was to learn what life was like for them.

His car began moving towards the forward command post at the summit of the mountain. There were 151 bends along the route, and by the roadside there were bushes uprooted and scattered by the strong wind and heavy rain; the path had been swept by a violent muddy stream, leaving only rubble. The car bumped along. One side of the path below was lined with hair-raising cliffs. Bang! A tyre was punctured on a sharp stone. The tyre was changed. As the car passed around several bends, it suddenly tilted sideways towards the cliff. The driver turned the steering-wheel quickly, and the car recovered its balance.

But Kim Jong Il remained unperturbed; he was more worried about the following cars.

When his car arrived at the breast of the summit, they heard the bang of another tyre being punctured. The driver, soaked with sweat, changed the tyre. Now only one spare was left.

The car continued to advance, but suddenly began to skid downwards.

Kim Jong Il, sensing the danger, got out and pushed the car up the mountain helped by his entourage. The car advanced inch by inch. At long last they arrived at the forward command post, having passed through 151 bends.

**“How are you?”** asked Kim Jong Il.

Moved to tears at the sight of Kim Jong Il with his clothes wet with rain and stained with mud, the commander responded in a choked voice, “We are all right, thank you, Supreme Commander. That you should come all the way along the rough road!”

### **A Snow-Covered Car Arrives at the Front Line**

On December 24, 2000, Kim Jong Il was inspecting a company of the Korean People’s Army stationed at the remotest point on the

front line. When they heard of his arrival, the soldiers could not believe their ears, because 300 mm of snow had fallen in the area the previous night, blocking all the roads to the post. Kim Jong Il, as he looked around at the cheering soldiers, said that he had come to see them, as they were defending a frontline post.

The soldiers wondered how he had managed to get there along the rugged, snow-covered mountain roads. They only found out after he had left, when they heard the following story from an official.

Before his visit, Kim Jong Il had inspected a power station built by the company. It was before dawn, and the world was covered with snow. The officers of the unit saw a car approaching, emitting two beams of light. Apart from the windscreen, which had been cleaned, it was just a heap of snow. To their surprise, Kim Jong Il alighted from the car.

The official also told the soldiers what Kim Jong Il had said:

**“I am very busy at the end of the year. I went to bed at one o’clock, but got up at four and set out for this post thinking the soldiers on the front line must be longing to see me. Although it was dark outside and the road was covered with snow, I was happy at the thought of seeing the soldiers at the outpost.”**

### **Affection for Soldiers**

One August day in 2008, Kim Jong Il was inspecting a company of the Korean People’s Army stationed in an area that was thick with poplar trees. He looked round the barracks, bathhouse, mess hall and food storehouse. He also toured a power station the company had built by damming a stream flowing down a mountain valley.

Below the dam a place had been laid out where the soldiers could bathe and enjoy themselves under the falling water.

Kim Jong Il spoke highly of the company's officers for making such effective use of the water pouring down over the dam. He said the soldiers would be very happy if they had a shower and could enjoy themselves under the falling water in the summer heat.

He feasted his eyes on the place, and asked the officers if there were any fish there. They replied that they were planning to raise fish. But he urged them not to do so, because the soldiers should be able to bathe in clean water.

The company's officers were deeply moved when they saw that the collar of Kim Jong Il's jacket was soaked with sweat.

He was visiting the company in the middle of summer when the ground was hot under the broiling sun and there was no wind; the plants were wilting and the birds were flocking to the water to cool themselves.

After he left the company, he explained his thinking.

I cannot forget the Poplar-Tree Company. Seeing a splash of water under my feet when the sweat was pouring down my body, I felt like having a swim there and then.

But he continued his field guidance trip.

### **From East to West**

The Korean people were often amazed at the news of Kim Jong Il's on-site guidance trips, because the places he visited were beyond their expectation. They said that his field guidance trips in their style reminded them of the Korean anti-Japanese guerrillas who had covered vast distances in next to no time.

On February 8, 2009—a Sunday—he arrived at the Ragwon Machine Complex situated at the northwestern tip of the country. He had travelled there by train immediately after winding up his on-site guidance in South Hamgyong Province on the east coast

late into the night of February 6. He had covered 400 km from east to west, even though he had been to the complex just three months previously.

He explained to the officials at the complex that, with the manufacturing of an oxygen plant becoming a matter of urgency, he had rushed there straight after providing on-site guidance at several factories and enterprises in South Hamgyong Province. His face betrayed this fatigue after the long journey.

His unexpected visit left the officials at the complex speechless. *However urgent the manufacturing of an oxygen plant may be, did you really have to come all this way today, on a Sunday?*

After exchanging greetings with the officials at the complex and inspecting the oxygen plant manufacturing line, Kim Jong Il made an appeal to them:

The successful renovation of the production lines at the Hungnam Fertilizer Complex depends on your timely manufacturing and delivery of the oxygen plant. As you know, the key to the solution of the fertilizer problem is to modernize the Hungnam Fertilizer Complex.

A senior official said that his complex would do whatever it took to manufacture a quality one on time.

Pleased to hear his resolve, Kim Jong Il said that he thought he need not worry about the oxygen plant any longer, now that the Ragwon Machine Complex had expressed its willingness to carry out to the letter the task he had given them.

### **Endless Inquiry**

In July 2001 Kim Jong Il was travelling in the Russian Federation by train.

He entered the dining compartment well after lunchtime,

having been preoccupied with his work. Seeing an official gazing out of the window, he asked him what he was thinking about.

After hurriedly greeting the leader, the official replied that he was thinking about how to carry out the task Kim Jong Il had given him the previous day.

Kim Jong Il told him it was a good habit for officials to think deeply and identify what was missing before they dealt with anything. Then he invited him to lunch and sat beside him, asking him what he had been thinking about during the several days of the journey from Khasan.

After a moment's hesitation he replied that he thought Siberia was really vast and that the Russian people must have gone to a great deal of trouble to lay the transcontinental railway.

Kim Jong Il nodded and said that before that he had delved into the practical issues. Then he said:

**“From the instant I entered Russian territory, I counted how many trains went past ours. I did it by looking out of the window by day and listening to the sound of the passing trains by night. In the course of this I made a general estimation of the composition of the trains and the amount of freight they were carrying. When I was so tired that I had to sleep, I asked someone else to take my place.”**

His remark really moved the official.

He continued: If we had been remiss while passing through the vast Siberian region, we would have missed a golden opportunity to make a study of Russia. If we are to deal with a thing or a phenomenon, we should not approach it carelessly.

Compared with the importance and significance of his visit to Russia, the number of trains passing through Siberia was of little account. Nevertheless, Kim Jong Il did not neglect the sound of passing trains; he was focused on developing his country's rail transport, fully aware of the role played by rail transport in economic development.

## **Train and Home**

One day in September 2009, when the Korean people were working hard to effect a fresh revolutionary upsurge in building a thriving country, Kim Jong Il announced that he would pay another visit to the construction site of the Huichon Power Station.

Ever since calling on all the people to launch a 150-day campaign aimed at building a springboard for a thriving country, he had been giving on-site guidance at numerous units without taking a rest.

An official politely asked Kim Jong Il to abandon his plan.

Kim Jong Il replied in the following vein:

Whenever I set out for on-site guidance, I rest easy at the thought that I will see my soldiers at the units of the People's Army and my people in factories or rural villages. So I'm going to the construction site of the Huichon Power Station with the thought that I will be seeing my soldiers and my people there. I am proud that I am giving on-site guidance for my soldiers and my people, however long and rugged the path is.

Another official told Kim Jong Il that the distance he had covered by train on his on-site guidance trips that year amounted to the figure for the previous ten years.

The officials entreated Kim Jong Il not to work too hard but to take care of his health.

While expressing his thanks, Kim Jong Il said:

Having journeyed so far by train and living on board, I've got used to it. Probably for this reason I feel as if I am at home when I am on my train and as if I am staying at a hotel when I am at home.

## **4. AFFECTION**

### **A Fisherwoman Rescued**

One winter night, a young fisherwoman was reported missing off the west coast of Korea.

Together with other villagers, she had gone to the tidal flat to collect shellfish at low tide. She had been so absorbed in what she was doing that she failed to notice the tide rising. By the evening she was trapped and was drifting helplessly out to sea. The villagers on the shore called her name anxiously and searched for her with torches, and several vessels put to sea to rescue her, but they could not see anything in the darkness.

Informed of the developments, Kim Jong Il immediately organized a search and rescue operation; he mobilized the Korean People's Army, and dispatched officials from the Party Central Committee to the place to oversee the rescue operation. He also ordered the emergency mobilization of the units and coast guards of the KPA near the village. The unprecedented rescue operation was conducted in a three-dimensional way—on land, at sea and in the air. However, there seemed there was little chance of rescuing the girl in the dead of night on the rough sea. The long night passed, and the following day dawned.

Kim Jong Il had asked frequently about the progress of the operation, saying that she must be rescued at any cost and that they should not inform him until she was rescued.

Twenty hours after the rescue operation had started, a wireless message was sent from a helicopter, "Subject detected." The helicopter had discovered the girl floating on an ice floe.

Unconscious, she was immediately taken to hospital, where she recovered after receiving intensive medical care.

Hearing this, her family and the villagers cried with joy, hugging one another. It was only when he received the report on the success of the rescue operation that Kim Jong Il could relax and begin to deal again with the work he had laid aside.

### **To Save Three Coal Miners**

One August day in 1975, Kim Jong Il was informed that three workers at a coal mine in the northern part of the country were in a critical condition.

The patients' situation was hopeless—third degree burns all over the body and in a coma; there appeared to be no chance of reviving them.

That evening Kim Jong Il called an official.

**“Do you know that the lives of the workers at the Sanghwa Youth Coal Mine are in jeopardy?”**

“Yes, I do. I have been told about the accident.”

**“Then, why did you not notify me immediately?”**

“I was afraid it might cause you anxiety.”

**“What do you mean? In such critical circumstances, is my anxiety a problem? What is more important now than to save them?”**

“I made a mistake.”

**“Well, what measures have you taken?”**

“I called the provincial Party committee and urged it to act.”

For a while he was unable to speak, and then he said:

I had told you over and over again that we should cherish warm humane feelings. I wonder when you will come to your senses. The patients are in a critical condition; what do you mean by only calling the provincial Party committee and the Ministry of Public Health? People call our Party the mother party and

follow it faithfully. Do you have an iota of motherly love in you?

The official could not raise his head.

Kim Jong Il told the official to take emergency steps immediately to save the patients, stressing that the best doctors and necessary medicines should be made available. And even though it was late at night, he ordered a plane to be dispatched to the coal mine.

But the heavy rain prevented a civilian plane from taking off. So Kim Jong Il ordered a military plane to be dispatched instead.

Informed that the patients were suffering from swelling, Kim Jong Il said that watermelon and beer were known to be effective for reducing swelling. So he ordered watermelons and beer as well as medicines to be sent to the patients that very day by helicopter.

Thanks to these emergency measures, the patients soon recovered.

He ordered another helicopter to be sent, saying that for their complete recovery, they should be taken to a large hospital equipped with modern facilities where they could undergo intensive care.

### **Blessed Triplets**

Early in July 1994, triplets were born in a remote village near the Military Demarcation Line that divides Korea into north and south.

Their father was an officer in the Korean People's Army.

Although the triplets received proper medical care, their condition was a cause for concern. Of the three, the condition of the third, which was the smallest, was particularly poor.

The neighbours were worried about saving the babies, especially as the village was difficult to access. All the roads into it were blocked because of heavy rain, and as the days went by the doctors grew more apprehensive.

But they did not lose hope; they were convinced that the triplets and their mother would be flown to Pyongyang as soon as the weather improved, because their leader Kim Jong Il had always ensured that all triplets and quadruplets were sent to the Pyongyang Maternity Hospital to be cared for, true to the intention of President Kim Il Sung who regarded the birth of triplets as a good omen for the country's prosperity.

And so the villagers and doctors looked up at the sky. But the sky grew darker, lightning flashed overhead followed by thunder, and the rain grew heavier. Worse still, the sad news of Kim Il Sung's sudden death was reported.

The doctors, as they watched over the incubators, wailed over his death and the babies' mother collapsed. The triplets were no longer mentioned; it was as if everyone had forgotten they even existed.

On July 12 an order was issued by phone and by telegraph:

- The Air Force of the KPA shall immediately dispatch a plane to Changdo-ri, Kimhwa County, to save the critically-ill triplets and their mother;
- The Pyongyang Maternity Hospital shall send a strong medical team led by its technical deputy head to the site;
- Pyongyang Airport shall prepare for the plane to land, whatever the weather conditions.

Who had given this order at a time when the whole country was weeping over the death of their President? Later it became known that it was Kim Jong Il.

Kim Jong Il was suffering from the greatest sorrow at the loss of Kim Il Sung. But he gave the order; such was his concern for the triplets.

And so a plane flew to the destination through the heavy rain.

When the plane landed, the triplets' family, the villagers—young and old, men and women—and soldiers gathered round it, shedding tears of joy.

155 days after they were taken to the maternity hospital, the triplets left it in good health.

### **Soldiers' Padded Clothes**

Late in February 1996 Kim Jong Il met two soldiers while inspecting a frontline unit of the Korean People's Army on Height 351.

Looking closely at their winter clothes, he asked them whether they thought the clothes were too thin. One of them answered that when they were on sentry duty, they wore fur-lined overcoats.

Kim Jong Il shook his head. He pressed their winter shoes with his finger, saying that they were also thinly padded.

Looking again at their winter clothes, which bore a lot of stitches, he told the officers accompanying him that the wind might get through the needle holes, that winter clothes without stitching would be better, and that they should make sure that soldiers didn't feel cold however much cloth might be needed.

Worried that he was staying too long on the height exposed to the biting cold, the officers urged him to leave.

But he declined, saying that when he saw the soldiers looking so cold he wasn't inclined to leave. His face clouded with anxiety, he went on:

**“You don't feel cold as you are wearing fine overcoats, but the soldiers do. The soldiers aren't here for the sake of their officers. The officers are here for the sake of their soldiers. Officers must be genuine officers for the good of their soldiers.”**

### **Light of Affection**

Once a cavalcade of cars, including one carrying Kim Jong Il, was driving to the front line. The cavalcade reached the Mujigae Tunnel on the road between Pyongyang and Wonsan.

Inside the tunnel the soldiers of the Korean People's Army seconded to repair the tunnel were sitting in their platoons or squads, eating.

Kim Jong Il, worried that his cars might disturb them, ordered a halt in the middle of the tunnel. The cavalcade stopped. As the headlights of the cars went out, the soldiers shouted, "Turn on the lights!" They seemed to prefer the car headlights to the electric lights hanging from the tunnel ceiling.

Bewildered by their reaction, the officials were made to leave their cars to seek an explanation.

But Kim Jong Il held them back, urging them to grant their request, as they would be surprised if they knew his identity.

After a moment, light streamed into the tunnel from the cars, brightening up the poorly-lit interior.

The soldiers burst out shouting and laughing with joy.

Time passed, and the officials suggested to Kim Jong Il that they leave. But he said they should keep the lights on until the soldiers' meal was over and that if they left immediately, it would cause them inconvenience.

Only later did the soldiers learn that the man who had done them this favour was their Supreme Commander Kim Jong Il.

### **My Sons and Daughters**

One March day in 1996, Kim Jong Il was inspecting a frontline post on Mt. Taedok. The post is located where the opposing forces are so close to each other that deadly firing may break out at the slightest provocation. Having climbed up to the observation post on a hill that was within a stone's throw from an enemy post, Kim Jong Il gave instructions to the unit and posed for a photograph with the soldiers.

The officers' faces betrayed their anxiety.

That evening, they pleaded with him, "Supreme Commander,

don't come to the frontline units any more, please. This is the request of not just the commanding officers.”

Kim Jong Il gazed round at the officers with a thoughtful look on his face, and then said that he fully understood how they felt and was grateful to them for their concern. Then, looking southward with an expression that suggested he was missing the soldiers on the front line, he said:

**“My sons and daughters are now defending their country on the front line. I have to see them to learn about their living conditions and encourage them. For this, I must go to the front line.”**

The commanding officers could not respond. How could they dissuade him from going to see his sons and daughters!

### **High-End Medical Equipment**

Late in June 1981 Kim Jong Il, while giving field guidance at Hamhung, visited the newly built South Hamgyong Provincial Preventive Dental Hospital.

In a treatment room, he saw an all-purpose dentist's chair. Touring the rest of the hospital, he said that no such modern dental hospital had yet been built in Pyongyang, and that having built this hospital in Hamhung, a city populated by a large number of workers, was something truly praiseworthy.

An official told him that foreign experts wondered why Korea was buying facilities for a local hospital which were used only for a king or a president in other countries.

Kim Jong Il exclaimed that there was no king in Korea; in Korea the people were the masters, and that the working people were entitled to use such equipment.

Since then the hospital has given dental treatment to many, many people.

## **Apologize to the Workers!**

On December 24, 2008, during a visit to the Chollima Steel Complex Kim Jong Il stopped at the smelters' canteen.

He said he was pleased to see that mineral water as well as nutritious foods was served to the workers.

Suddenly, pulling a face, he commented that the temperature in the canteen was low and he felt cold. Then he said:

**“It’s no use the workers eating in such a cold place, however good the foods are. You are wrong not to have done anything even though you must have seen the workers eating in this cold room.”**

The officials had considered the workers to be lucky to have nutritious foods at a time when everything was in short supply, and had paid little attention to the low temperature in the canteen.

Kim Jong Il said that the manager and the chief secretary of the Party committee of the complex should gather the workers and apologize to them for their mistake and ensure that the temperature in the canteen was raised to an acceptable level before New Year's Day.

## **A Hot Spring**

One day in July 1976, Kim Jong Il, having just enjoyed the sunrise over Mt. Paektu, told his officials that he would visit the Naegok Hot Spring.

The officials were at a loss what to do, because if he left for the hot spring at once, he would miss his breakfast.

When an official asked him to leave for the hot spring after having breakfast in Samjiyon, Kim Jong Il said that after climbing Mt. Paektu, he was ready to miss several meals.

He told another official, one who was quick on his feet:

You take the lead. Let us hurry to the hot spring and look around. It would be good for us to do something else for the people's benefit before we leave for Pyongyang. Don't worry about me. The Naegok Hot Spring contains various medicinal elements. I would be very happy if we build a sanatorium so that people can relax there and visitors to Mt. Paektu can bathe there on their way back home.

So he went to the hot spring without having breakfast.

He tested the water's temperature and amount with his hand and then looked around the area. He explained how a modern sanitarium and recreational facilities could be built.

Just then, a train loaded with logs passed through the village, whistling loudly. Kim Jong Il stopped speaking and watched the train disappearing round a mountain bend. Then he said that the village must be quiet for the patients receiving medical treatment and the railway prevented this. So, the railway should be moved.

The village was surrounded on all sides by mountains, so moving the railway would involve digging a tunnel 400-500 metres long. But Kim Jong Il stressed that however hard the task might be, the railway must be moved, for the sake of those who would be enjoying the hot spring.

Later the railway was moved, and the village, once noisy with train traffic, was filled with laughter.

### **Restored Appearance**

One day in December 2004 Kim Jong Il met a woman and two men.

The three, although they had been longing to see him, kept their heads lowered. They were worried that he would see the burns on

their faces. They had suffered severe burns all over their bodies while saving trees bearing slogans written by the anti-Japanese fighters from a fire.

Looking closely at the woman, Kim Jong Il asked her what medical treatment she had received.

She was too excited to reply.

An official standing beside Kim Jong Il told him that her burns had largely healed after 14 operations at the Hamhung Orthopaedics Hospital and the Pyongyang University of Medicine Hospital.

Kim Jong Il looked sympathetically at the three people. Then he said that, in view of how badly burned their faces and hands were, they should be sent abroad for further treatment.

At this, tears welled up in their eyes.

The woman had at first felt ashamed to be seen, but her agony gradually abated as everyone expressed respect for her and a military officer volunteered to be her life companion, saying human beauty was not in the appearance but in the mind.

On her wedding day, when a senior official in her home town told her to raise her head proudly as she was a laudable woman who had cherished an iron faith that had remained undamaged even in the flames, she decided she should no longer be concerned about her burns.

But when her daughter was born she was afraid that her burns might be reflected in the baby's eyes. She soon soothed herself with the thought that she would understand and be proud of her mother when she grew up.

Gazing at the three people sobbing uncontrollably, Kim Jong Il stressed that the operations on their faces must be conducted perfectly so that their children could see their true appearance.

A year later the woman, having returned home after receiving medical treatment abroad, told her two-year-old daughter in a voice thick with emotion, "My dear daughter, look at your mother's face

that has been restored to its original appearance thanks to General Kim Jong Il's fatherly love."

### *Pomhyanggi* Cosmetics

On March 8, 2008, the East Pyongyang Grand Theatre was filled with excitement.

Kim Jong Il, along with deputies to the Supreme People's Assembly, senior officials of the Democratic Women's Union, writers, journalists, newsreaders, creative workers and artistes—all of them female—was enjoying a performance in celebration of International Women's Day.

When the performance was over and Kim Jong Il left the theatre, an official mounted the stage and announced that Kim Jong Il had sent all the entertainers and audience gifts, and that a conferment ceremony would soon begin.

The news took the audience by surprise. *Gifts even to us? We have just enjoyed an art performance. It would be all right for the performers, since they must have gone to a lot of trouble.*

At the ceremony gifts consisting of a set of high-end *Pomhyanggi* cosmetics and several kinds of foodstuffs were handed to each of the more than one thousand performers and members of the audience.

But they did not know how the gifts had been prepared. Late one evening several days previously, Kim Jong Il had asked about the production capacity of the Sinuiju Cosmetics Factory, and said:

**"I'm happy to hear the factory can produce 1 500 sets of *Pomhyanggi* cosmetics by tomorrow. I need them for International Women's Day."**

Then he called an official and said that the cosmetics should be transported to Pyongyang by train because they might be broken if they were transported by truck or bus.

Just before the International Women's Day performance started, Kim Jong Il had said to an official that he would give the gifts to the male performers as well; as this would make their wives very happy.

### **Naming a Baby**

The following anecdote illustrates how genuine are the Korean people's feelings for their leader Kim Jong Il.

On March 21, 2000, Kim Jong Il dropped in at a house in Taehongdan County in the northern mountainous region of Korea. The householder, an ex-soldier, gave him a military salute, thanked him for his visit, and then said that his own parents were yet to visit his new home.

Looking at him and his wife with affection, Kim Jong Il said it was natural that the Supreme Commander of the Korean People's Army should be the first to visit an ex-soldier's new home, and asked him how long he had been married. The young man was too shy to answer. A senior official of the county responded instead, saying that he had married the previous year on the occasion of the founding day of the army, which is April 25, and that his wife, who had volunteered to come from Pyongyang to work in Taehongdan, was now expecting their first child.

Smiling, Kim Jong Il congratulated the couple, and asked the wife when her baby was due. She answered, in July. When he asked whether the baby would be a boy, she answered, yes. It was quite a scene—the leader asking questions affectionately and the woman answering animatedly. Hearing her, everyone laughed at this newly married woman, who was so confident she would give birth to a son. Kim Jong Il, too, laughed heartily.

Suddenly, the woman whispered something to him. But amidst the roar of laughter, he could not catch what she said.

Then taking Kim Jong Il by the sleeve, she asked, “Could you name my baby?”

Her request was so abrupt and seemingly so impolite that the officials stopped laughing.

But instead of reproaching her, Kim Jong Il said, **“Isn’t it a little bit too early?”**

Saying that he could not name the baby when there was no telling if it would be a boy or a girl, he promised that he would name it later.

That evening Kim Jong Il, recalling his visit to the family, said that it is customary for the father to name his baby, but that he thought he ought to name the baby as an expression of his wish for its bright future, to satisfy the woman’s request.

**“I think it would be a good idea to name it Tae Hong if it is a boy and Hong Dan if it is a girl.”**

When the two names are put together, they make Taehongdan, the place where the baby’s parents had volunteered to work to promote potato farming.

This is how Hong Dan of Taehongdan came to be born.

### **Leaving a Page Blank**

It was one spring day in 1995.

Kim Jong Il was all smiles as he turned over the pages of a document. It was the schedule he had drawn up for the forthcoming visit to Pyongyang by the women soldiers of a coastal artillery unit, known as the Persimmon-Tree Company.

He was examining the document for any possible flaws, and asked his officials if the arrangements had been made to take photographs of the women during their visit.

An official answered casually that the visitors would bring a camera with them.

But Kim Jong Il thought differently: *They may bring a camera with them, but the quality of photographs taken by amateurs would not be as good as those taken by professionals. How disappointed they would be if they mishandled the camera and damaged the film!*

He suggested it would be good to arrange for a professional photographer to accompany the visitors to all their destinations and compile albums for them of their visit.

When the soldiers were packing up their things at the end of their Pyongyang visit, they were presented with photograph albums. There was one for the company, and one for each girl containing pictures of her.

Overjoyed, they began to look through their albums, only to find the first page left blank.

They looked with puzzlement at the official who had brought the albums.

The official explained. After the albums were ready in their smart bindings, Kim Jong Il had started turning the pages of an album. The first page contained an individual photograph of its owner. Seeing this, he became lost in deep thought.

The officials were at a loss. After a while, Kim Jong Il suggested having the first page of each album left blank.

*A blank page?*

He noted that after being discharged, they would pose for photographs with their husbands on their wedding days; it would be significant to have one of these photographs on blank page.

Hearing this story, the girls all wept.

“Father!”

### **Compatriotic Affection across the Barrier of National Division**

Late at night on August 31, 1984, the rain was pouring down, as it was the close of the rainy season. Kim Jong Il was on a field

guidance tour, and stood by the window at his lodgings. He was gazing at the sky over the southern part of the country.

Then he told his officials that the sight of the unceasing rain made him very concerned about his compatriots in south Korea. He added that the heavy rain must have triggered severe flooding, and that the people would be suffering.

He went on:

**“It seems that a man’s longing grows stronger as the night advances. Thinking of the south Korean people, I feel my heart rending. It is very painful for me to think that our compatriots in south Korea are suffering so much owing to the division of the country.”**

Then he turned to watch the torrential downpour outside. As he had predicted, terrible floods swept Seoul and many other parts of south Korea, claiming 350 lives. In all, 207 000 people were made homeless by the disaster; those who were left alive, were desperate for relief.

Learning the news, Kim Jong Il skipped his meal and called an official. He said that when he thought of the flood victims he could not eat, and urged him to come up with ways of aiding them.

Soon afterwards, a decision on sending relief goods to the flood victims in south Korea was made public in Pyongyang.

Kim Jong Il said:

There is no need to spare relief goods however huge the amount needed may be. Blood is thicker than water. There is nobody else but us who the victims can turn to. The relief goods should be prepared with utmost care.

Thanks to his warm affection for his compatriots, a vast quantity of relief goods including 50 000 *sok* (one *sok* equals just under five bushels) of rice, 500 000 metres of cloth, 100 000 tons of cement and a large amount of medicines were delivered to the people in the south across the barrier of national division. This was the first ever undertaking of its kind since the division of Korea.

## Saeppyo

One day in November 1990 Kim Jong Il received a letter of thanks from a Cuban couple working in Korea. In the letter they asked the Korean leader to name their son, who had recently been born at Pyongyang Maternity Hospital.

There is a moving story behind the reason for this request.

The couple were linguists working as Spanish copy editors. There was one thing more than any other that made them anxious; they had no child eight years after their marriage.

Having suffered several miscarriages, the wife got pregnant again and was admitted to Pyongyang Maternity Hospital. The couple were in part delighted, in part worried, because it was three months before the expiry of their visa, and they were obliged to leave Korea.

Their anxiety worsened as the days went by.

Informed of the situation, Kim Jong Il made sure that their stay was extended to allow her to give birth at the hospital.

Afterwards, the woman had an easy delivery, giving birth to a son.

To express their gratitude to the leader for his care, the Cubans wrote a letter of thanks to him, in which they requested him to become their baby's guardian and name him after the Korean fashion.

Kim Jong Il was delighted to learn that the foreign couple had produced their first son and said that it would be a good idea to call him Saeppyo (Morning Star) as the morning star is seen everywhere in the world in the morning.

He sent the baby presents including cloth, clothes, quilts, condensed milk and sugar.

The Cuban couple were very grateful to receive the name and presents.

There are more similar examples of babies being named by Kim Jong Il, such as Jindallae of Palestine and Sol Gwang of China.

### *A Girl in Spring*

One day in July 2008 Kim Jong Il was enjoying a performance given by the visiting N. S. Nadezhdina State Beryozka Dance Troupe of Russia. He spoke highly of the dance troupe, which was headed by Mira Koltsova.

In a conversation with the leading members of the dance troupe, he recollected Koltsova's role in *A Girl in Spring*. He said that he would soon arrange for the film to be broadcast on TV, and urged them to watch it while they were in Pyongyang.

The star of the film, now old, could not believe her ears. The film had been popular once, but had been largely forgotten after the downfall of socialism in her country. There were few who could remember her role in the movie, and it was little more than a distant memory even for the old heroine. It seemed to her that she was returning to her youth several decades back.

Soon afterwards, the film was screened twice on Pyongyang TV. Seeing herself in her prime, the old woman felt as if she was in a dream.

Later, at another meeting with Kim Jong Il, she told him tearfully that although she would be 70 within a few years, she still wanted him to remember her as the heroine of *A Girl in Spring*, adding that she still kept her Communist Party membership card.

She is now working to sustain the heritage of the traditional culture of Russia. And she brings her dance troupe to Korea almost every year.

## 5. OBLIGATION

### Respected Mentor

President Kim Il Sung wrote in his memoirs *With the Century*:

**“A man who has a mentor he can recollect throughout his life is truly a happy man.”**

The President often recollected his boyhood mentor Shang Yue, who had taught him literature at Yuwen Middle School in Jilin, China.

Kim Jong Il also had his mentor, whom he had still recalled several decades after he left Kim Il Sung University.

Early in January 1995, when asking an official about the university, he recalled a particular professor. He said that he was one of the leading professors in the Economics Faculty, and added that several days earlier he had seen him on TV, looking old.

He paused for a moment as if to picture the grey-haired professor in his mind, and then called him his respected mentor.

He turned to the official and continued:

I am also a human being. Men should respect their mentors. I'm going to send the old professor a gold watch inscribed with President Kim Il Sung's autograph as a present for the New Year.

He then asked the official to convey the watch and his best regards to the professor.

A few days later, a ceremony for conveying the leader's present to the elderly professor took place at Kim Il Sung University.

At the ceremony, the professor said tearfully, “From olden times a man who burns with passion, like a candle, for the sake of the younger

generation, has been called a mentor. General Kim Jong Il is the benevolent father and a great mentor who takes good care of all the people in the country. I am the happiest man in the world because I am an educator living in the memory of the great mentor.”

### **Attending a Medical Operation for a Veteran**

One autumn day an anti-Japanese war veteran was rushed to hospital. Diagnosed with cancer, he was in a critical condition. The doctors said he would have to undergo emergency surgery. Hearing that an operation was the only way to save the patient, Kim Jong Il advised the doctors to go ahead.

However, the results of a pre-operation examination were not good. The patient’s vital signs suggested that there was little chance of the operation being a success.

Just then Kim Jong Il entered the operating theatre, and said that he would attend the operation on behalf of the patient’s family and the Party Central Committee.

He moved closer to the patient and consoled him, saying that he should not worry as he would be with him throughout. Holding the patient’s hands, he asked him to squeeze his hand if he was in pain, and reassured him that he would not leave him.

The old man clasping the leader’s hands looked like a child groping for his mother. Gently, his eyes closed.

Time passed, and to the surgeons’ surprise, all his vital signs gradually stopped fluctuating and went back to normal. It was as if the patient’s psychological worries had ceased as a result of the leader’s presence.

And so the operation began. Initially expected to last a couple of hours, it took more than five hours. Kim Jong Il remained beside the patient holding his hands, sweating as much as the doctors did.

At long last the veteran's life was saved.

This is not the end of the story. Some time later, he was sent abroad for a second operation. It, too, was successful.

After convalescing for five months abroad, he returned on a special plane sent by the leader. On the way from the airport he thought he would go home and change his clothes before seeing the leader. So, he was surprised to see Kim Jong Il outside his house. Kim Jong Il greeted him and asked if he was all right. He explained that he had intended to go to the airport, but had waited there as he was afraid there would be nobody to greet him at his home after such a long time away.

Then he continued:

**“I attended the first operation here, but not the second one in the foreign country. Instead, while you were undergoing the operation, I was kept informed of the progress. As far as I remember, your temperature at the time of the operation rose slightly, to 37.6 degrees.”**

The old man realized that the leader had been with him during the second operation, too.

Tears gathered in the eyes of the stout-hearted war veteran.

### **Through a Downpour**

One night in May 1981, Kim Jong Il, when he was at his lodgings in a provincial area, was informed that Sim Chang Wan had died of a heart attack.

The sad news came as a shock to the leader.

Sim had accompanied him to open up a tourist path up the famous Mt. Myohyang. He had led the way up the mountain, determined to realize the leader's intention of making the picturesque resort freely accessible.

But on the last leg of the mountaineering he had collapsed and

slipped into a coma. Holding the unconscious man by his head and supporting it on his lap, Kim Jong Il cried, **“Sim, what should I do if you collapse here? Pull yourself together.”**

He was rushed to a hospital in Pyongyang.

Kim Jong Il recollected the man who had often pledged that he would never leave his side.

The leader refused to eat as he waited for news from Pyongyang. But the man eventually died.

It was raining outside and the thick trees were swaying in the wind. He unhooked his collar and flung the windows open. The rain slapped into his whole body, but he stood there. He stayed awake all night.

At dawn, when an official came to his room, Kim Jong Il said they should cancel all their engagements for the day and return to Pyongyang, as he would feel slightly better if he attended the funeral.

The official was perturbed. Owing to severe flooding caused by the torrential rain that had lasted throughout the night, the river had swollen and submerged the bridge on the way to Pyongyang.

The official advised leaving for Pyongyang the next morning.

But Kim Jong Il insisted. **“No, I must go. Sim Chang Wan is lying dead. Please inquire if there is an alternative route.”**

The official said that there was one, but with a railway bridge on the way.

Kim Jong Il did not relent. **“Is that so? Let’s go across the bridge. A revolutionary soldier, who was so loyal to the Party, is lying dead, and there is no reason for us to hesitate about crossing a railway bridge to see him. Let’s go.”**

He and his party left. They had covered four kilometres when they saw a narrow railway bridge.

Glancing down into the violent muddy stream, the officials felt dizzy and stepped back.

They tried to dissuade Kim Jong Il by blocking his way, but he walked through them to the bridge, saying that they should follow him carefully. They picked their way over the sleepers behind him.

After several anxious moments they reached the other side of the river. Kim Jong Il urged his entourage to hurry up.

Not long after, the road ahead was again cut by flooding. Nothing could be seen above the water but a railway embankment. Without a moment's hesitation, he headed for the embankment, which led to Pyongyang.

He was talking to himself fretfully that it was unbelievable that the man had died so easily and that human life could be so unpredictable. Bitter tears were rolling down his cheeks. Kim Jong Il walked on through the downpour along railways and footpaths and even across maize fields.

They had covered scores of kilometres when they saw the headlights of a car approaching them in the distance. It was nearly 10 pm.

Upon arriving in Pyongyang, Kim Jong Il visited the bier of the deceased. The man was lying as if in a deep sleep. Kim Jong Il stood for a long time beside him, watching his face from tearful eyes.

### **Don't Forget the Martyrs**

In September 1998, on his way back from an inspection of frontline military units, Kim Jong Il visited the Patriotic Martyrs Cemetery on the outskirts of Pyongyang.

He toured the tombs one by one, looking in particular at the photographic images carved on the tombstones.

**“Here I can see all the unforgettable people. It seems that every one of them has come back to life. Their photographs look good,”** Kim Jong Il commented with satisfaction.

Saying that it might take a long time but he would see all the martyrs' images, he inspected all the remaining tombs which were arranged in tiers. In front of one tomb he recollected that the man had contributed a great deal to strengthening and developing the revolutionary armed forces, and seeing another, praised him for his great service to construction, especially in the capital city.

He stopped for a while before each tomb as if he was having a personal conversation with the martyrs.

He said in a hoarse voice that they had been boundlessly faithful to the Party and the revolution and it was heartbreaking to think that they had died so early when still in their prime.

He continued examining other photographs. Dusk fell, but he was reluctant to leave. He examined them with the help of his car's headlights.

He went down the stairs to leave and stopped again, saying, **"Today, having looked round the Patriotic Martyrs Cemetery, I regret to see that there are some martyrs missing. All the martyrs who lived an honourable life for the Party and the leader should be buried in this cemetery."**

He then mentioned the names of some officials who had been faithful to the revolution to the last moment of their lives, and advised that their remains be moved to the cemetery and tombstones with their photographs carved on them, erected. He stressed that the Party and the people would always remember the great achievements they had made for the independence and reunification of the country and socialist construction.

On his return from the cemetery, he met some officials and said pleasantly that the cemetery, with the martyrs' photographs carved on the tombstones, had taken on a new appearance.

Then he asked, **"Have you all been there?"**

The officials were struck dumb at this question.

"Well, we were too busy ..." said one of them, trailing off.

Kim Jong Il's smile faded. He reproved them for not visiting the cemetery even after being informed that photographic images of the martyrs had been carved on the tombstones, and accused them of lacking a sense of revolutionary obligation and comradely love. He pointed out that they should never forget the patriotic martyrs who had devoted themselves to the liberation of the country, socialist construction and national reunification.

He went on:

Korean revolutionaries value their revolutionary obligations more than their lives. We achieved single-hearted unity and created the glorious history of the Korean revolution on the strength of this noble sense of moral obligation. Our Party is strong and our revolution is invincible because we have inherited and developed the brilliant tradition of revolutionary obligations created by President Kim Il Sung.

By now, the officials were looking embarrassed. He said:

**“All of you should visit the Patriotic Martyrs Cemetery. Your comrades there would be happy to see you.”**

### **Prisoners Repatriated**

When Napoleon's army retreated from Moscow, they left behind some soldiers who were being held captive in Russia. Later, Russia notified France that it could take the POWs back, but the newly installed Bourbon dynasty refused the offer. The soldiers spent nearly 30 years in prison and, after their release, lived in misery tilling the site of the destroyed prison and yearning for their native land.

This is a tragic episode in history.

A contrasting scene unfolded in Korea. Sixty-three prisoners who had refused to be converted during many decades spent imprisoned in south Korea, returned to the north.

One day in February 1994, one year after the return of Ri In Mo, an unconverted long-term prisoner, had caught the attention of the world, Kim Jong Il told an official that all the remaining unconverted long-term prisoners should be brought back from the south. Noting that the previous year he had assigned the task of drawing up a list of their names and addresses, he said that there was no match in human history for the revolutionaries who remained unconverted for 30 to 40 years in prison, and that such people could only be nurtured by the Workers' Party of Korea. He added that he regarded their repatriation as a matter of his revolutionary obligation to his men, who had served the Party faithfully on the road of revolution, and as an expression of his affection for them.

In the following years he would often recall the prisoners in their misery, and had measures taken to make their return possible.

In June 2000, when the historic inter-Korean summit took place to discuss issues related to national reunification, he resolved once and for all to bring back the patriotic fighters.

Inside the car taking them to the Mokran House for a banquet after one-on-one talks lasting four hours, Kim Dae Jung requested the settlement of the issue of "separated families." Kim Jong Il said that the north would send 100 people to Seoul as a group of separated family members and their relatives to mark August 15, Korea's liberation day, that year, and the south should do the same. He went on that in return, the south should send the unconverted long-term prisoners back to the north. On the way back from the banquet he again raised the issue with the south Korean president.

As a result, the issue was included as an article in the June 15 North-South Joint Declaration adopted at the summit.

Although their repatriation was now only a matter of time, Kim Jong Il was still concerned. He told the officials that when they were brought back, they should be given the best treatment and considerable publicity.

On September 2, 2000, his long-awaited men, 63 in all, returned to the north. They were awarded the title of Hero of the DPRK and the National Reunification Prize, and provided with the finest living conditions. When one of them had a daughter, Kim Jong Il named her Chuk Bok, which means Blessing in Korean.

### **Invariable Stand**

Some time after President Kim Il Sung had passed away, a member of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Workers' Party of Korea suggested to Kim Jong Il that it was high time that he be elected to the helm of the Party and the state.

Kim Jong Il turned down his offer, saying that he could not allow the cries of mourning to change into cheers.

He said:

**“A communist should seek satisfaction in waging the revolution, regardless of his post. I have always considered myself to be one of Kim Il Sung’s men. I will carry forward and accomplish his revolutionary cause as his loyal man, just as I did in his lifetime.”**

He remained thoughtful for a while and recalled how Khrushchev and other revisionists had tarnished their moral obligation as revolutionaries.

Khrushchev had lauded Stalin as an “immortal genius” when he was alive, claiming to be his “faithful disciple” and cheering him louder than anybody else. After Stalin’s death, however, having taken the helm of the party and state through intrigue, he began slinging mud at his predecessor, calling him a “cruel dictator” and “tyrant.” He debased Stalin’s achievements in socialist construction and the victory in the anti-fascist war, on the pretext of “opposing the personality cult.” His gang of modern revisionists changed the names of cities, factories,

enterprises, rural communes and streets named after Stalin, pulled down the monuments to his exploits and even cremated his corpse, which had been lying in his lifetime appearance in Red Square. Modern social democrats have been more frenzied than modern revisionists in slandering their former leaders and obliterating their achievements; while the latter attacked Stalin mainly under the veil of advocating Leninist principles, the former lifted the veil itself to defame Marx, Engels and Lenin, to say nothing of Stalin.

Kim Jong Il confessed that he felt heart-broken when he recollected these episodes.

He told the official in a resolute voice that instead of concentrating on the formation of a new leadership, they should think about how to safeguard the revolutionary cause of Juche pioneered by President Kim Il Sung and carry it forward successfully, and that they must only follow the road of revolution that he had travelled and concentrate all their efforts on carrying out his cause.

### **To Honour the President Forever**

Nearly a month after President Kim Il Sung had passed away, Kim Jong Il visited the Kumsusan Assembly Hall (today the Kumsusan Memorial Palace) again. He told the officials accompanying him that he had come to select a room where the President would be laid in his lifetime appearance.

While going round the building's interior, he stopped in a hall named after Mt. Kumgang. The hall was named this because of a mural portraying the picturesque scenery of the famous mountain—majestic waterfalls, oddly-shaped rocks and forests ablaze with autumnal tints.

The hall had become well-known to the public through

newspapers and TV broadcasts, for in this hall the President had met guests from at home and abroad, posing for a photograph with them and explaining to the foreigners the time-honoured history and beautiful landscape of Korea, as depicted in the mural.

Recollecting those days with deep emotion, Kim Jong Il gazed at the mural and looked around. Then he said that he had decided that this was the most suitable place to keep the President in his lifetime appearance. The officials agreed, saying that he was quite right, since the hall had been the President's favourite place and contained more traces of him than anywhere else. What they did not know was this was not his sole reason; there was something more important behind this choice.

Later he told them:

**“While directing the work of building the Kumsusan Memorial Palace into the supreme sanctuary of Juche, I chose a room in a high location as a place to keep the President in his lifetime appearance. The Lenin Mausoleum stands under the rostrum of Red Square; when a military parade or other events are held, officials stand on the rostrum. This means they are standing on the Lenin Mausoleum, which is morally wrong. I chose the room in a high location so that visitors would ascend the stone staircases leading to the room to pay homage to the President. It is our duty to do this, as we are all his men.”**

### **A Tribute Paid on the Front Line**

April 15, 1997, was the 85<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Kim Il Sung's birth.

That day, Kim Jong Il was inspecting units of the Korean People's Army on the front line. He stopped in front of a broad, flat rock on Mt. Jihye. Kim Il Sung, when he went to Mt. Jihye on

September 23, 1951, during the Korean war, had spread his operations map on the rock and held a briefing with the commanding officers. After listening to their reports on the situation at the front, he finally confirmed the direction of the enemy's main attack in their "autumn offensive."

Kim Jong Il proceeded to the monument commemorating those events and gazed at it, deep in thought.

He then said to the commanding officers accompanying him:

**"We have to spend today, April 15, at the front, so we cannot go to the Kumsusan Memorial Palace to pay tribute to leader Kim Il Sung. Let's pay tribute to him in front of this monument on Mt. Jihye."**

His entourage lined up behind Kim Jong Il.

Then Kim Jong Il said, **"Attention! Salute!"**

His solemn order echoed across the mountain.

### **An Official Is Moved to Tears**

One day an official hurried to Kim Jong Il's office, his heart bursting with delight. He was holding a document on a project associated with defence building, one President Kim Il Sung had been particularly concerned about in his lifetime. Regrettably, the project was completed only after his death.

Barely managing to contain his excitement, the official opened the door and stepped into Kim Jong Il's office.

Kim Jong Il set aside what he was doing, and began to read the document. Silence reigned in the office, except for the sound of Kim Jong Il turning the pages.

After a while he finished reading and stood up, the document in his hand. He walked up to the official and grasped his hand. Then he said, **"Let's go and see the President."**

The official was confused. As if in a daze, he followed Kim Jong Il

to the door. When they were just about to leave his office, Kim Jong Il came to a halt, his smile turning into a look of profound grief. So preoccupied had he been with bringing happiness to the President that he had forgotten the sad reality.

Seeing the official, he said in a choking voice that he felt as if the President was still alive, and every time he received reports that problems the President had been concerned about were solved, he would feel an urge to go to his office.

The official was moved to tears. Grasping his hand, Kim Jong Il consoled him, saying, **“I made you cry when you brought me good news.”**

### **To V. I. Lenin**

On August 4, 2001, Kim Jong Il visited the Lenin Mausoleum on Red Square in Moscow, an event that caught the attention of the international community.

During the time of the Soviet Union, Red Square had been called a sacred place of the country and the world revolution. It was a moral convention for party and state leaders from socialist countries visiting the Soviet Union to go to the mausoleum and pay their respects to Lenin, the great leader of the international working class and founder of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the Soviet state.

However, following the collapse of the Soviet Union, the convention disappeared. Slander and insults against him were officially allowed, and attempts were even made to remove his mausoleum.

In this situation, it was no wonder the Korean officials accompanying Kim Jong Il were apprehensive when he said he wanted to visit the mausoleum.

However, Kim Jong Il dug his heels in. He said to the officials:

I will go to the Lenin Mausoleum during this visit to Russia no matter what anyone says. I'm going to the mausoleum out of the moral obligation of a genuine revolutionary to his leader. If anyone finds fault with my visit he will be betraying his own meanness and depravity. A jewel shines even in mud. The world will come to know what the noble moral obligation of a genuine revolutionary is if we visit the mausoleum, at a time when it is being abandoned and insulted by renegades of the revolution. We must visit the Lenin Mausoleum as planned, no matter what anyone else says.

When his motorcade arrived in Red Square, the Korean officials were surprised. The Russian government, which had not notified them until that morning of the form of reception he would receive, had placed a guard of honour at the mausoleum.

In the course of the previous ten years no foreign party and state leaders had visited the Lenin Mausoleum and Sentry Post No.1 of the guard of honour had disappeared. Red Square had looked desolate. That day, however, the square was enveloped in a ceremonial mood.

Kim Jong Il slowly approached the mausoleum, a solemn look on his face. Then he stepped on the pavement under the midsummer sun.

In front of him were young Russian soldiers goose-stepping and carrying a wreath he had prepared.

It was only a few steps to the mausoleum, and cameramen from Russia and other countries were desperate to record the historic moment. Moscow, Russia and the whole world watched him, with bated breath.

As the Russian soldiers laid the wreath and moved aside, Kim Jong Il adjusted the ribbon on the wreath, on which were written, **“To V. I. Lenin. Kim Jong Il.”**

A solemn look filled Kim Jong Il's eyes as he paid tribute.

The world seethed with news of his visit to the mausoleum.

“August 4 is the day when the Lenin Mausoleum, subjected to

humiliation from reactionaries of all hues, met its saviour. Comrade Kim Jong Il's visit to the mausoleum was a great and courageous act which instilled in the revolutionaries of the whole world, who are fighting for socialism, inexhaustible strength and courage, and a historic event which confirmed their belief that only when they follow a man like Kim Jong Il can the socialist movement achieve certain victory."

"The noble respect the leader of the socialist cause of the 21<sup>st</sup> century paid to the pioneer of the socialist cause of the 20<sup>th</sup> century is a stirring event which shows the moral obligation of Kim Jong Il as a leader of the cause of global independence."

## 6. MODESTY

### Cotton Flower

One day in September 1969, Kim Jong Il was visiting a cotton field at a farm. As he looked round the fields, he expressed his satisfaction at the good cotton crop and asked the officials to name the flowers they liked best.

One by one they named the flowers they liked, such as the azalea, lily bell and rose, saying that they liked beautiful and fragrant flowers.

After listening to what they said, he commented:

Of course, people are fond of beautiful and fragrant flowers. True, as you mentioned, we love roses because they look beautiful and smell fragrant. However, there is a flower more beautiful than the rose. It is the cotton flower. I love it.

That evening, after they all returned to their lodgings, an official, who was still doubtful, asked him if he really loved the cotton flower.

Smiling, he said that as he may not understand him if he simply answered, he would ask him first. Imagine there are two persons, he said; the first one looks beautiful and perfume surrounds him, but he is not faithful to his job and seeks only his personal interests; the second works conscientiously whether he is seen or not although he is not so good-looking and does not wear perfume; so, who do you prefer?

“I prefer the second one,” said the official carelessly.

Kim Jong Il said that he was right, and went on.

In our socialist society in which people are striving under the slogan “One for all and all for one!” a beautiful man is one who works faithfully for his country and fellow people. No one hates a

good appearance and the smell of perfume. However, if he is not loved by the people, he looks ugly and disgusting. That is why there is a proverb which says, “Better a good heart than a fair face.” If I compare the two men to flowers, the first one can be likened to a rose and the second to a cotton flower. The rose is planted for ornamental purposes, but nothing is left after its flowers are gone. However, the cotton flower leaves cotton, though it is not as fragrant and beautiful as the rose.

Kim Jong Il continued:

**“Although cotton is so useful, its flower does not show off to people. Instead, it bows its head as if very shy. I feel more attached to it and greater affection for it because it refrains from being showy, despite all the benefits it brings to people.”**

### **Good Things to Others and Bad Things to Oneself**

One day in March 1974 the people attending the National Conference of Industry had a photograph taken with President Kim Il Sung.

After seeing the photograph, Kim Jong Il summoned some officials and said:

There are not many labour innovators in the photograph. Instead, there are many Party, administrative and economic officials and they are posing for the photograph in the front row. If they regard themselves as privileged, they are mistaken. They are so proud that they have lost their sense of propriety. Of course, it is praiseworthy that they regard it as an honour to be photographed with President Kim Il Sung. But they ought to give up their places to the labour innovators so that they can be in the front row.

And yet, the mistake was repeated.

When an important project was completed, President Kim Il Sung had commemorative photograph taken with the participants in the

project. Officials who had been dispatched to guide the project stood in the front row.

Kim Jong Il called the officials concerned, and rebuked them, saying that it was all right for them to pose for a photograph, but that as officials they should have let the workers, technicians and scientists who had worked harder than anybody else during the construction stand in the front row, and they themselves behind them. Adding that giving way to others was a fine human virtue which they still did not know how to observe, he continued:

**“Someone who gives good things to others and takes bad things on himself is a true man. I hope all our officials will become such men.”**

### **Son of the People**

The following happened while Kim Jong Il and his fellow students from Kim Il Sung University were taking part in a project to widen the road between Wasan-dong and Ryongsong, Pyongyang, in 1961.

One day an old woman appeared at the site, carrying an empty bucket and a shovel. She was planning to dig up the pieces of coal that were sometimes discovered at the site.

A student approached her, and asked her whether she had run out of coal.

The old woman replied, “No, I haven’t. But it would be a waste to leave them here.”

The student arranged for an excavator to dig up the coal and move it to a safe place so that people could collect it and take it to their houses. Then he personally shovelled some into the old woman’s bucket.

The old woman, when she discovered later that the student was

Kim Il Sung's son, came back and said, "You did such menial work for an ordinary old woman."

Holding her two hands, Kim Jong Il said:

**"I am also a son of the people. How can I mind doing such menial work if it is for them? There is nothing more worthwhile in the world than working for the people."**

### **When He Was Most Upset**

In August 1969, Kim Jong Il was in a region giving on-site guidance.

One day an official came to see him, and found a maid wiping away her tears.

He asked her curiously, **"What's the matter with you?"**

"When I entered his room I saw Comrade Kim Jong Il doing his laundry. I tried to take the laundry from him, but he told me not to. What shall I do?"

The official went into his room. Kim Jong Il was hanging shirts and socks on chairs in a well-ventilated place.

Kim Jong Il poured some scorched-rice tea with chips of ice floating on it from a thermos, and offered it to him.

It was Kim Jong Il's favourite tea. In the summer he would drink it, saying it was particularly good then.

The official asked him:

"Do you have to do the laundry yourself? You can have a maid do such things for you."

Laughing, he said that many people were minding his private life that day.

"We are not nosing into your private life. We just hope that you don't do such menial work."

Kim Jong Il laughed more loudly.

**"How can I break a habit from my childhood?"**

The official urged him at least not to do the laundry.

Kim Jong Il asked him for what he should break the habit.

“You are a man respected by the whole people of the country.”

Remarking that the official would make a prince of him, Kim Jong Il asked:

**“When do you feel most upset?”**

As the official did not reply for a moment, Kim Jong Il continued:

I feel most upset, for example, in today’s circumstances, in other words, when people try to accord me special treatment, regarding me as someone privileged. Words fail to express my feelings at such moments. If I must express them, I feel pain, as if I’m sitting on a cushion of needles.

The official realized that his offer had caused Kim Jong Il pain in his heart. He was embarrassed.

Kim Jong Il continued as follows:

Our leader Kim Il Sung regards the people as above himself, and says that he is their son. That is why he lives a humble and simple life, always sharing weal and woe with them. My principle in life differs little from his. Above me, Kim Jong Il, are the people, and Kim Jong Il is their son—this is my principle in life. In performing my proper duties as the people’s son, I have never expected any special treatment or privilege, nor will I do so in the future either. It is my greatest pleasure to live a humble life as others do. So please do not offer me any special treatment or privilege, like asking me to have someone else do my laundry for me. Asking me to enjoy special treatment or privilege is tantamount to sitting me on a cushion of needles.

### **Waiting for a Turn**

It was one afternoon in October 1972. A car, its horn honking, was driving towards the forecourt of a petrol station in Pyongyang. It was halted by a watchman at the gate, who scolded the driver,

saying, "You must come through the back gate to get petrol, but you are coming in at the front gate. It's against the rules. Go back!"

The driver got out of his car and made a polite greeting to the watchman, pleading with him to do him a favour, as he was pressed for time. But the watchman refused.

An official at the station who witnessed this was impressed by the driver's politeness and wondered if the watchman had not gone too far.

Just then, the back door of the car half-opened, and somebody inside said to the driver that if it was a rule at the station to enter through the back entrance and come out of it through the front one, they should observe it, adding in a soft voice that the driver should turn the car around. Then the back door opened fully, and a young man got out, smiling brightly. After greeting the station official, he told him that he was very sorry, that since it was the first time he was there he was not familiar with the rules, and that it was because he was so pressed for time that he had come to the forecourt, without any consideration.

He then told his driver to turn back and observe the station's rules, explaining that everyone should abide by the rules and regulations.

His car turned around and headed for the back entrance.

The station official stood for a while, thinking. That young man had not looked like an ordinary man, so he ran to the back entrance.

The car was standing at the end of a long queue, awaiting its turn.

The official asked the driver who the young man was. As soon as he was told that he was Kim Jong Il, he appealed to the drivers of the cars in front to move out of the way. The cars began to make way, blowing their horns. Then the official told Kim Jong Il's driver to proceed.

But when he noticed his driver blowing his horn and passing

the cars in front, Kim Jong Il told him not to, saying:

Don't overtake them. We should not be an exception to the rule. If others are awaiting their turn, we should do so as well. We should also observe public order.

So his car remained in the queue, like the others.

When it finally reached the station, the official greeted him again. Kim Jong Il smiled, commenting that the official was greeting him twice but would not have been bothered by them if his car had observed the rule. He then told his driver that it seemed that only drivers were allowed into the station to fill up with petrol, and if this was the rule, they should also keep it.

The station official begged him to remain in the car, but Kim Jong Il got out and stood by the roadside.

### **An Ordinary Passenger**

The following happened in June 1975. Kim Jong Il, learning that President Kim Il Sung was concerned about the farming situation at home even during a visit abroad, went to inspect the west coast regions to acquaint himself with the farming situation there. It was late at night when he finished his work, but he told his officials that they should go straight to Kangwon Province on the east coast.

The officials were astonished, as they had thought he would return to Pyongyang. They implored him to set out the next day, considering how late it was.

Kim Jong Il told them that since the President was concerned about the farming situation even when he was in a distant foreign land, he could not spend even a night in comfort. He insisted that he would start for Kangwon Province there and then to learn about the farming situation in the east coast areas.

The officials were about to go and get the cars ready, when he

stopped them, saying he would go by train so that the drivers could get some rest.

So, they tried to arrange a special train. But he stopped them once again. Stressing that train timetables, once set, should be kept, Kim Jong Il said arranging a special train would disrupt rail transport. He asked them when the next train for Wonsan would leave. An official told him the time.

**“It’s all right then. I am an official working for the people, so I will go by that ordinary train.”**

After waiting for a while at the railway station, he boarded the train.

Some days later, the chief secretary of the Party Committee of South Hamgyong Province was informed that Kim Jong Il would see him at a railway station in his province after winding up his on-site guidance in Kangwon Province.

The official drove at high speed to the station, only to find the train pulling in, blowing its whistle. Thinking himself fortunate, he approached the train, but suddenly stopped when he realized it was not a special train, but an ordinary passenger train. He looked at it again in bewilderment, but he was not mistaken.

He was wondering if there might be another train following it, when he heard a familiar voice calling him.

**“You’re here.”**

Kim Jong Il was smiling broadly from a carriage in the train.

Though he had witnessed and heard on many occasions of Kim Jong Il’s simplicity and modesty, the official had never thought that the leader, dressed and behaving just like the other passengers, would continue his field guidance trip on board a passenger train.

Kim Jong Il said he was spending several days learning about the farming situation, and wanted to know about rice-transplanting in South Hamgyong Province. Then he gave instructions that the weeding should be speeded up and fertilizer production significantly increased.

After that he boarded the train and left.

Few of the other passengers ever knew that Kim Jong Il was travelling on board their train.

### **A Disappointed “Special Envoy”**

On February 9, 1987, a senior official went to see Kim Jong Il to get permission to organize a major celebration of his birthday which falls on February 16. He said he was representing the wish of his colleagues and indeed the wish of all the Korean people.

After listening to what he had to say, Kim Jong Il said with a laugh:

You look like a special envoy who has come to persuade me. Your face is betraying you. You seem to think that stubbornness will get you everything. Indeed, a saying has it that milk goes first to the baby who cries. I am well aware what you are thinking and what the people, who hold me dear and in affection, are thinking. Isn't this enough? I feel embarrassed every time you suggest holding ceremonial events on my birthday, referring to it as the “February holiday.” I am a follower of President Kim Il Sung. How can one of his followers celebrate his birthday on such a grand scale? We must celebrate the birthday of the President in April as the one and only greatest holiday of the nation. I feel happiest when our people enjoy themselves on his birthday.

The official was moved, but stood where he was, waiting for his approval.

Kim Jong Il admonished him, saying:

If you are so stubborn in this matter, I am more embarrassed. You know what I think, don't you? Please go back and tell the others how I feel. I really feel grateful to you for trying to make me

happy, but I will never allow you to hold grand events in celebration of my birthday.

He was quite determined. After gazing at the official for a while, he continued that they would soon be greeting the President's 75<sup>th</sup> birthday, and that they should celebrate the April holiday on the grandest scale.

His words were a definite statement that his birthday could never be a national holiday.

The official felt helpless, but with tears in his eyes, he pleaded with Kim Jong Il once again.

But Kim Jong Il said in a choking voice:

Ours are an excellent people. This is why I worship them. Whenever I greet my birthday, I remember my motto, "I must bring flowers into bloom even on a rock if it is for my people." And it is my genuine feeling that if people want it, I must bring flowers into bloom even on a rock.

The "special envoy," realizing he could no longer be "dogged" before him, left Kim Jong Il's office.

### **A Decree Issued Three Years Later**

The decree by the Central People's Committee of the DPRK, titled, "On celebrating Kim Jong Il's birthday, February 16, as one of the greatest national holidays," was made public in February 1995. It had been signed by President Kim Il Sung on February 7, 1992, but making it public had been put off for three years.

There is the following story.

For the great contribution he had made to the country and people true to the intentions of President Kim Il Sung, Kim Jong Il enjoyed the absolute trust and boundless reverence of the Korean people. The Korean people, who had acclaimed him as the

successor to the President, prided themselves on having another great man and on being blessed with leaders.

And so they had for a long time wished to celebrate his birthday as one of the greatest national holidays along with that of President Kim Il Sung, April 15, and this wish grew more intense as the years went by. But Kim Jong Il always refused and spent his birthday, busy with state affairs or giving on-site guidance.

This wish was expressed as an unquenchable national force in letters and requests sent from across the country on the occasion of his 40<sup>th</sup> birthday in 1982.

However, Kim Jong Il said that President Kim Il Sung's birthday alone should be celebrated as the greatest national holiday, and even forbade making his birthday public.

Kim Il Sung was informed of this, and instructed that Kim Jong Il's birthday should be made public.

On February 15, 1982, the country's mass media reported a decree by the Central People's Committee of the DPRK on awarding Kim Jong Il the title of Hero of the DPRK on the occasion of his 40<sup>th</sup> birthday. The next day, on February 16, Kim Il Sung organized a banquet in honour of Kim Jong Il's birthday.

Everybody was in a state of jubilation at publicly celebrating the February holiday, anticipating that Kim Jong Il would take a rest and enjoy himself.

However, he told officials that he had made a pledge to the President that day to make greater efforts, and that it was his lifelong mission to carry forward to completion the cause of Juche pioneered by the President. After the banquet, he went to a construction site to give on-site guidance.

It was because of this humility that the decree signed by the President in February 1992 was only made public three years later.

## **7. STRONG WILL**

### **Two Pine-nut Trees**

It was in the afternoon of October 10, 1950, during the Korean war. The Korean People's Army was on its strategic retreat.

Young Kim Jong Il said to some officials that he would like to plant a tree on a sunny foothill near his lodgings to mark the anniversary of the day when Kim Il Sung founded the Workers' Party of Korea. Then, together with his younger sister, he chose two young pine-nut trees and started digging.

The officials helped him to lift the trees, taking care to keep the roots undamaged, and prepared to plant them.

Kim Jong Il and his sister began digging holes for the trees, despite the officials offering to do it. Kim Jong Il continued to work, saying that the holes should be dug deep enough.

After a while he told his sister that they should plant a tree each, and with the officials' help, moved the trees near the holes.

His younger sister asked him if the pine-nut tree was a good species.

He answered:

It's a good tree. It's an evergreen. It is not afraid of severe snowstorms in winter. When autumn comes around, the leaves of other trees fall off, but the pine-nut tree keeps its leaves green and fresh. And it bears a lot of nuts. Now these pine-nut trees are little, but if we water them every day and tend them carefully, they will grow tall and bear many nuts. Then, let's come here again together with our father. He will be very happy to see the trees we planted.

The following day he said to an official who was about to set out for the Supreme Headquarters:

Although the Americans are running wild to conquer us, they will never succeed. If they burn one tree, we must plant ten, even a hundred, trees to make our mountains and fields greener. By the time these two young trees have grown tall, our country will be the wealthiest in the world.

He was only eight years old in those grim times; yet he planted the trees with a firm conviction in victory.

### **What He Likes and What He Hates**

One day in October 1958 an official went to see Kim Jong Il, who was a higher middle school student at the time.

The official asked him what he liked best and hated most.

Kim Jong Il was well aware that the man was by nature very inquisitive. So he repeated the question, laughing loudly:

**“What do I like best?”**

Then he answered.

**“I set the greatest store by the revolutionary faith that I have made my mental prop. Every day I examine whether there is even a slightest crack in my revolutionary conviction and discipline myself.”**

“I see. Then, what kind of people do you like best and despise most?”

**“I hold in highest affection those who have such a strong faith that it does not change in any adversity and such a strong will that it never bends. I despise most those who are devoid of faith, feeble-hearted and easily abandon their convictions. In short, I like best people who have a strong revolutionary conviction, and hate most those who abandon it easily.”**

“I have one more request. I’d like you to give me an aphorism

concerning the life philosophy of a revolutionary—one that I could cherish all my life.”

**“A revolutionary must not only make a good start in life, but also finish it well. Hold your revolutionary conviction dearer than your life as long as you live, and graduate from life with honours, cherishing your revolutionary faith unto death! This is what I’d like to ask you to cherish.”**

### **Declaration of That Day**

In January 1959 Kim Jong Il visited a university in Moscow.

Established in the 1750s, the university had a long tradition of over two hundred years; it was developed on an extensive scale, and had several institutes and hundreds of departments, more than a hundred lecture halls, 1 700 laboratories, 4 000 classrooms and 6 000 tutorial rooms. It was the pride of the Soviet Union. What was more, it had a building constructed only a few years before and educational facilities purchased at great expense that were objects of world envy.

With great interest, Kim Jong Il looked round the university’s lecture rooms, research rooms and laboratories.

He was then taken to a lounge. An official from that country, who had been guiding him, briefed him on the history of the university again and said that young people from many countries of the world were studying there. He gave examples of how the university had produced many government-level officials for other countries.

He then said to Kim Jong Il:

“I hope you will come to this university after finishing higher middle school in your country. It is not my personal, diplomatic recommendation. It is an earnest wish cherished by this university that values a genius who may promote the progress of mankind.”

His was a sincere wish, but Kim Jong Il declined the request,

saying, **“Thank you for your kindness, but we have an excellent university in Pyongyang. I will study at Kim Il Sung University with my comrades.”**

Young people across the world were longing to study at the university, but Kim Jong Il was declining the offer and declaring that he would study at Kim Il Sung University.

It was only after many years that people realized his declaration reflected his noble aspiration and firm faith.

### **“O Korea, I Will Add Glory to Thee”**

Kim Jong Il, on his first day at Kim Il Sung University—September 1, 1960—climbed Ryongnam Hill on the campus, accompanied by some of his fellow students.

The morning sun over the Taedong River was shedding golden beams on the green lawns through the dense shrubberies.

With his arms akimbo and his body lit by the morning glow, Kim Jong Il looked down at the main university building.

After a while, he said in an emotional voice:

**“Taking charge of the Korean revolution and carrying forward the leader’s cause from one generation to the next is our noble duty to the times, the revolution, the country and the people. Add glory to Korea, the country of the great sun, throughout the ages—this is my unshakeable faith and will.”**

He then told his fellow students that he felt like reciting a poem.

They asked him to go on, and he began:

**As I stand on Ryongnam Hill at sunrise,**

**The land of 3 000 *ri* greets my eyes.**

**Learning the leader’s great idea,**

**I’ll be the master of the revolution in Korea.**

**O Korea, I will add glory to thee.**

...

## **A Man of Letters or a Man of Arms**

The following happened one September day in 1962, during his time at Kim Il Sung University when Kim Jong Il was attending a military camp at Oun-dong.

It was chilly in the morning, but he had a cold bath in a mountain stream as usual. A student asked him if he intended to pursue a military career after graduating from university.

This unexpected question elicited a hearty laugh from Kim Jong Il. He asked his fellow campers whether they were curious about his future career and what their thoughts were.

The campers told him what their thoughts were.

“You are majoring in political economy now, so you will follow that line.”

“You have a special interest in military affairs, so you will pursue a military career.”

After looking round at them for a while, Kim Jong Il said:

I'm interested in both the pen and the sword. I intend to have an easy rapport with both fields without any bias towards either. I mean to have not an average but a perfect command of them and to explore them in depth. Nothing is more important than military affairs in the present circumstances in our country. A statesman should be well versed in both civil and military affairs. A man of politics must be versatile in military affairs. The imperialists are constantly building up their armed forces in order to stifle the socialist countries and manoeuvre to ignite a war if the chance presents itself. For this reason, a statesman must be well versed in both fields. And as military science and technology are developing at a very high level nowadays, one should have an in-depth, perfect command of military affairs.

The campers were all greatly moved.

Kim Jong Il not only regarded his future career as his personal one, but linked it directly with the future of his country and his nation.

He went on to say that a man of politics was not one in the true sense of the term if he was ignorant of the military arts, and that the prestige, role and ability of a modern statesman must find expression in his military prowess, courage and ability to command.

He stated excitedly that he advocated top priority for military affairs, that he was ready to confirm that his foremost concern was for the military, and that he always pursued the military-first policy.

### **Holding the Red Flag High**

June 20, 1964 was an unusually clear and fine day.

It was Kim Jong Il's second day at the Central Committee of the Workers' Party of Korea, and he stayed up all night. At dawn, he had a morning stroll with some officials in the garden of his office building. He suddenly stopped and looked up at the red flag flying above the building. The flag was fluttering in the morning breeze. His eyes riveted to the flag, he said:

**“The flag of our Party fluttering at the top of the Party Central Committee building is symbolic of victory and glory and of the revolution; it has witnessed every manner of fierce struggle. The history of the Party's flag began when General Secretary Kim Il Sung organized the Down-with-Imperialism Union and held high the red flag of the revolution. It was then that our Party began to strike firm root.”**

He gazed at the red flag of the Party for a long time. The flag was fluttering more strongly.

He went on, **“From now on we must fly the red flag high. We must work more vigorously to accomplish the cause of the great**

**leader, holding high the red flag of the revolution, whatever difficulties and trials we may face on the road of the revolution.”**

### **Seeing Out the Year in Tears of Blood**

December 31, 1994 was drawing to a close, amid the bitter grief over the sudden demise of President Kim Il Sung.

In his office, in an atmosphere of solemn silence, Kim Jong Il was having a conversation in his mind with the late President Kim Il Sung and his beloved people.

He then said to the senior officials of the Party and state who were there with him:

**“We are seeing out this year, still grieving over the death of the great leader Comrade Kim Il Sung. The great leader dedicated all his efforts to the freedom and happiness of our people and to the prosperity and development of our country.”**

He was so overwhelmed by sorrow and regret over the death of the President that he could not continue speaking.

The officials hung their heads, and sobbed.

After a long while, Kim Jong Il calmed himself down and said:

Making our country, our motherland, ever more prosperous was his intention and his cause. We must remain true to his intention and cause and make our country, our motherland, ever more prosperous.

This was a pledge he was taking before the late President, and also a declaration of his unshakeable faith and will.

The seconds were ticking away.

Everyone in the country was looking forward to the New Year Address, which he would deliver. There were rumours even among the hostile forces that he would deliver a New Year Address, from which they could guess the will of Korea and the roadmap of its advance.

He sat at his desk. A blank sheet of white paper was on the desk, and the room was in silence.

He remained deep in thought for some minutes before he began to write a letter to all his people.

**“We have seen out the year of 1994 in tears of blood, and are now greeting the New Year.**

**“Let all of us work energetically, single-mindedly and with one purpose to make our country, our motherland, ever more prosperous, as befits the soldiers and devoted followers of the great leader. January 1, 1995. Kim Jong Il”**

It was still the dead of night outside.

The glow of a glorious history was spreading in Korea.

### **Eternal President**

On September 5, 1998, the mass media around the world listened attentively to Radio Pyongyang.

The First Session of the Tenth Supreme People’s Assembly of the DPRK was to be opened within a few minutes; at the session a new state leadership body, its new president in particular, would be elected. For that reason, the meeting was a matter of great interest to the whole world.

Nobody had ever doubted that Kim Jong Il would be elected President of the DPRK. It was regarded as such a certainty that some foreign reporters had even written articles anticipating the nationwide cheering at the news.

Radio Pyongyang’s broadcast, however, confounded everybody. People around the world could hardly believe their eyes and ears. *Kim Il Sung was acclaimed as the eternal President of the DPRK!*

It was normal practice to elect a new head of state on the very day the previous head died, within a few days at the latest. But in

the DPRK a full four years had passed since the death of President Kim Il Sung without a new president being elected.

At the ceremony held after this long postponement, Kim Jong Il saw to it that Kim Il Sung was acclaimed as the eternal President of the DPRK. So, what was his intention?

As early as in July 1994, when the whole country was mourning the sudden death of President Kim Il Sung, Kim Jong Il declared:

**“Although he has passed away, it is my firm determination to have leader Kim Il Sung, who made such an extraordinary contribution to our country and people, to the world and mankind, and who enjoyed the highest respect and reverence, as the one and only President, as the first and eternal President in the history of our country.”**

He went on that the title President Kim Il Sung, which was so dear to the whole of mankind, should be etched in the history of Korea, and that the younger generations should always refer to Kim Il Sung when they used the word *President*. He then stated that he was determined to uphold for eternity the great leader Comrade Kim Il Sung, just as he had in his lifetime, based on this viewpoint and attitude, and thus Kim Il Sung would be upheld as the one and only President in the history of Korea.

Kim Jong Il ensured that the recording of the policy speech Kim Il Sung had delivered at the First Session of the Ninth Supreme People’s Assembly was replayed as a substitute for his own policy speech at the current session.

### **“Lord of War”**

One day in the late 1990s Kim Jong Il was inspecting the construction site of the Anbyon Youth Power Station. As he was

about to enter a water tunnel that was under construction, officers stubbornly tried to block his way.

“It is dangerous inside, and there is still water inside, Supreme Commander.”

Saying that he would see the tunnel even if there was still water in it, he got into his vehicle.

As he looked round the tunnel, lit up by the headlights of his vehicle, tears welled up in his eyes. Maybe he was reminded of the story of the soldier-builders he had just heard. The soldiers had kept on hammering and pushing their tramcars, saying they would not leave the tunnel before it was completed, until it became almost impossible for them to remove their clothes and shoes because their flesh was so swollen after working for so long in the waist-deep water; 27 soldiers who had been trapped in a caved-in pit had asked through a compressed-air tube for compressed air instead of food; a young soldier who had been critically injured in an accident had encouraged his companions, singing *Song of the Red Flag*, and had urged them until the last moment of his life to complete the project as soon as possible so that it could be inspected by the Supreme Commander.

Kim Jong Il went deep inside the tunnel, and praised the soldiers repeatedly, saying they had done a lot of work. Then he went on in a harsh voice:

Our soldiers have wrought a great miracle. They carried out my order without fail by braving all the difficulties. This is the revolutionary spirit of our People’s Army.

Referring to the might of the revolutionary soldier spirit, he said, **“Stalin called the gun the ‘Lord of war,’ but I want to call this spirit of our soldiers the ‘Lord of war.’ A man with a strong spirit can be called the strongest man in the world, and this is something that cannot be measured by any yardstick.”**

## A Giant Tree and Its Roots

One February day in 2009 the rumbling of a Korean People's Army artillery drill reverberated throughout the country.

The sounds of gunfire excited the senior officers present, giving them confidence that a prosperous and powerful nation could be built. They told Kim Jong Il that in the present historic struggle they would be as loyal to him as green leaves are to a giant tree.

Kim Jong Il, with a smile, said that the roots were more significant than the leaves, and lapsed into thought for a while. Then he said that officials must become the roots that support the country and the revolution, like the roots of a tree.

He went on to say, slowly pacing up and down:

For a tree to grow healthy, it must have strong roots. Only when its roots are strong can the tree grow into a giant one. If the roots get rotten, the tree, however big, will wither away. A giant tree is imposing with its thick branches and leaves, because its roots continually provide nutritious elements from underground to the trunk. The giant tree is visible, but its roots are not. There are many people that admire the tree for its size, but few of them think of the roots supporting it. They work underground without rest, whether they are appreciated or not. Revolutionaries are to the revolution what the roots are to a tree.

He continued:

**“If the revolution, a big tree, is to remain unperturbed in the face of any wind and advance victoriously, the revolutionaries, its roots, should be sound and faithful. Become the roots of the revolution—this is an outlook on life we revolutionaries should acquire today.”**

To the excited officers, he said that revolutionaries should be determined to become the roots, that leaves may be shed in the

wind and rain but the roots are strong and steady even beneath the frozen ground, that if roots struck deep underground suck nutritious elements properly then the tree will grow vigorously, that likewise, if revolutionaries are prepared firmly and united single-heartedly, the revolution will win one victory after another and the country will become ever more prosperous, and so they must become the roots, not the leaves.

The officials answered him in chorus, “Great General, we will become the roots that support the big tree, not its leaves.”

Kim Jong Il smiled broadly, and said:

**“I’m going to become the strong roots of the revolution together with you.”**

## 8. COURAGE

### Sturdy Fist

One October day in 1954, Kim Jong Il's class was having a drawing lesson.

The teacher told her pupils to draw their fists, and fixed a painting she had drawn herself on the blackboard for their reference.

The pupils began to draw their fists. Some repeatedly looked up at the picture fixed on the board, and others drew their fists on the desk. Their approaches all differed; however, one thing was the same—they were all drawing their left fists.

The only exception was young Kim Jong Il, who was using his left hand to draw his right fist—which was clenched with the thumb on the second and third fingers. The fist looked strong.

While others failed even to finish their sketches, Kim Jong Il managed to colour his.

A pupil who was returning to his seat after taking a closer look at the picture on the board was surprised to see Kim Jong Il's painting. So was the boy behind him.

Kim Jong Il said to them that the teacher had told them to draw their own fists, that they had two fists, right and left, and that the right fist was stronger than the left one.

With the lesson nearly over, the teacher looked at the painting done by Kim Jong Il and compared it to the rest of the class's.

The teacher made all the pupils sit down, and said that she would show them the best drawing.

It was Kim Jong Il's painting, with the title *Sturdy Fist* written boldly.

The fist in the picture, tightly clenched, looked as if it could even crush a rock.

The pupils all exclaimed.

Even as a boy Kim Jong Il was nurturing an unexcelled spirit and matchless courage with which to crush the imperialist aggressors.

### **The *Pueblo* Cannot Be Returned**

On January 23, 1968, the US armed spy ship *Pueblo* was captured by the sailors of the Korean People's Army, after intruding into the territorial waters of the DPRK.

This was the first time in US naval history for a ship to be captured in this way.

The United States deployed a vast military force, including nuclear-powered aircraft carriers, around the DPRK, and threatened it would even go to war unless the *Pueblo* was returned.

Kim Il Sung asked Kim Jong Il what he would do with the captured ship if he was the Supreme Commander.

Kim Jong Il replied that he would never release the crew of the *Pueblo* unless the US administration submitted a letter of surrender, and that even in the event of surrender, he would not release the ship, since it was a war trophy.

The situation developed as he had predicted.

The United States, overpowered by the military countermeasures of the DPRK that was determined to retaliate against its "retaliation" and return all-out war for its "all-out war," was forced to sign a letter of apology, acknowledging their criminal acts and giving an assurance that they would not be repeated. The crew of the *Pueblo* was released by being expelled from the territory of the DPRK.

But the *Pueblo* still remains as a war trophy of the KPA.

## Commendations for Brave Soldiers

In the morning of August 18, 1976, a US guard officer and ten soldiers in a jeep and a heavy truck turned up in the joint security area at Panmunjom, and began to chop down a poplar standing on the DPRK side. The guards from the Korean People's Army on routine duty tried to prevent them, warning that as the tree was in the area under the control of the DPRK side, they should get approval from the DPRK side in advance if they had to fell the tree. Whereupon the US soldiers pounced on the KPA soldiers, wielding axes and calling in reinforcements.

The four enraged KPA guards, compelled to fight against more than 40 enemy soldiers, threw back their axes, killing two US officers and injuring several others. The Yankees took to their heels in panic. This triggered the Panmunjom Incident, which reverberated around the whole world at the time.

The United States, as if it had been waiting for the incident, put hundreds of troops and heavy arms on standby in the joint security area, shipped into south Korea reinforcements from the US mainland and Okinawa in Japan, and deployed a carrier strike group led by the aircraft carrier *Midway* in the seas off Korea.

Kim Jong Il was informed by a senior officer of the KPA about the brave battle fought by the KPA guards at Panmunjom, and spoke highly of them. Then he asked if there was any plan to officially commend them.

The officer answered, his looks still betraying his anxiety:

“It is too tense a situation to even think of awarding them. We are in a crisis because of the Panmunjom Incident; war may break out at any moment.”

Kim Jong Il said, laughing heartily:

How can a man stay still when others suddenly attack him, trying to kill him? It was an act of self-defence. They fought heroically. If they didn't have such mettle, how could they have defeated the enemy? It is excellent of our soldiers to have the courage to accept a challenge and fight fearlessly whatever the circumstances. We should spare nothing for the brave soldiers. We should award high commendations.

While the enemy were in combat readiness, taking up positions south of the Military Demarcation Line, the KPA soldiers in their dress uniforms were being awarded high commendations in Pyongyang, amidst loud applause.

### **War and Music**

In August 1976, the Korean peninsula was plunged into a tense situation by the Panmunjom Incident, which had been provoked by the United States. A Korean foreign affairs official who was attending the Fifth Summit of Non-Aligned Countries in Colombo, Sri Lanka, was desperate to hear more about it.

He returned to his motherland within a few days of the incident. He went to see Kim Jong Il.

He could hardly believe his eyes when he saw Kim Jong Il listening to music.

War and music—this presented a shocking contrast.

Seeing the official enter, Kim Jong Il lowered the volume of the music, asked how his trip had been, and told him to come and listen to the music with him.

The official waited till the music ended, and said to Kim Jong Il, “I heard in Colombo a full report on the Panmunjom Incident. Frankly speaking, I was feeling uneasy all the way back home about the tense situation, which seems to be on the brink of war.”

**Kim Jong Il said, “The prevailing situation in our country is very tense owing to the Panmunjom Incident. War may break out at any moment. The United States cooked up the Panmunjom Incident and is frantically manoeuvring to ignite a war, using it as an excuse.”**

Listening to him, the official was even more surprised that he could be listening to music at such a critical time.

Kim Jong Il continued slowly:

The United States is talking big outwardly, but in fact it is afraid to fight with us. It is them, not our people, that are trembling with fear over the incident. I regard their frantic moves as nothing but an anachronistic expression of mental derangement. It is of little worth. They would never dare touch even a hair of our people.

Listening to his words, which were full of the spirit and dignity of a brilliant commander, the official felt courage swelling inside him, and thought, *His extraordinary courage in regarding the US war racket as a worthless bluff has filled this room with songs of optimism and victory.*

### **A Conveyor Belt Laid across the Sea**

The Unryul Mine on the west coast of Korea was faced with the problem of disposing of overburden. The mine found it difficult to continue production as it had to invest so much labour and time in removing the mountains of overburden. The mine was at a crossroads—to continue production or close its pits.

In early January 1974, Kim Jong Il learned about the actual situation at the mine. He instructed that the overburden should be removed by means of a conveyor belt, and dispatched an official to the mine to survey the area, prior to the installation of the conveyor belt.

The official surveyed the area, and reached an agreement with

the officials there on installing a conveyor belt that ran from the mining district to the seashore. Then the overburden could be poured into the sea. He continued with the survey, along with the mine's technicians. But things did not go as he had expected: his study of the conditions for laying the conveyor belt revealed that the scale of the project would be enormous. So he tried to find a site between the mining district and the seashore, but nowhere was appropriate. *What should I do?*

Unable to find a solution, he went to Kim Jong Il. He explained to him the actual state of affairs, without missing anything, and told him that the project was challenging.

It was obvious to Kim Jong Il that the official was not confident about the project, but he laughed out loud and said that since such a project had not been undertaken before, it would not be so easy. Then he added, **“So far we have done everything we decided to do. We have the unquenchable creative wisdom and strength of our heroic working class. Let's go ahead with confidence, and build the conveyor belt at the Unryul Mine as a monumental structure of our era.”**

He stood up from his seat and went to the map of Korea hanging on a wall. His eyes were riveted to a point on the west coast for a good while. Then he asked the official, **“You proposed laying the conveyor belt from the Youth Mining District to the seashore?”**

“Yes.”

**“To the seashore?”**

He sounded unhappy. He turned eyes again to the map, this time to the small islands off Kumsanpho. The official could sense that Kim Jong Il's eyes were growing bright. At last, Kim Jong Il turned to him, and said resolutely:

**“I think the conveyor belt should be laid straight across the sea, not to the seashore. Well, come nearer.”**

Pointing at the map with a red pencil, he continued, **“To this**

**Nunggum Island. And at the next stage, across these islands, linking them.”**

The official was already calculating something; An additional *5 100 hectares of farmland!*

With a hand on his hip and a smile on his face, Kim Jong Il said, **“What do you think? Don’t you feel more confident? When the project is over, we will have built a dam across the sea and obtained a large area of farmland. Then, the appearance of the country will be changed beyond recognition.”**

### **An Unusual Football Match**

The following happened when the world-class West Sea Barrage was under construction.

One April day in 1983, Kim Jong Il, who was giving field guidance at the construction site, received a report on the methods being proposed for building the cofferdam.

One was building it by the conventional method, which would take seven years. The other was a newly developed method, which would shorten the period of the project by far. But some people were dubious of the second method, saying that if it was used in building the cofferdam, the cofferdam may collapse as it could not withstand the great water pressure from the sea.

Kim Jong Il asked what was the basis for advocating the new method.

“Though on a smaller scale, an army unit carried out a project by employing the method in the past.”

**“Then the basis of the argument is sound, is it not?”**

He resolutely stated in the following vein:

To all intents and purposes, we must trust science. What is the reason of hesitating when hydraulic tests have been conducted and

a cofferdam, though small in scale, was built by the method? As the hydraulic tests and our experience show, the cofferdam will never collapse. I support the new method.

His words instantly removed the apprehension of the officials who had been sceptical of the new method, though it had been scientifically verified. Kim Jong Il's stentorian voice continued:

Some weak-hearted people are afraid that the cofferdam may collapse, but when it is completed, I suggest holding a football match in it.

In less than a year, the soldier-builders completed the cofferdam, pumped ten million cubic metres of sea water out, and played a football match on the dry floor amidst the roaring waves all around. And the eight-kilometre-long West Sea Barrage was built across the sea within just five years.

### **A Voyage Not Recorded in History**

One day in November 1996, Kim Jong Il set out to see the soldiers defending Cho Island in the West Sea of Korea.

Just as the speedboats were about to leave the port, a fierce wind blew up. The officials tried to dissuade him from sailing in such foul weather. But he insisted on boarding his boat, saying that the soldiers on the island were waiting for him and that he had never sailed with a fair wind.

The cameramen accompanying him got their cameras ready to record the historic voyage. They were aware of their responsibility to show the people how arduous was the path their Supreme Commander was following.

But the ferocious waves struck the bows of the boats and tossed them up. In their boat, which was moving up and down almost vertically, the cameramen were unable even to stand, and fell to the

deck, rolling around and colliding with one another. Their cameras and camcorders were broken. They felt guilty, blaming themselves for failing to show the world the historic voyage.

But the moving scenes of that day could not be erased, even though they were not filmed by any camera. The scenes were imprinted on the hearts of the soldiers as they raised a cheer from the shore when they saw their Supreme Commander in his speedboat.

At the island, Kim Jong Il left the boat, saying, **“The West Sea is more impressive than anyone says.”**

### **“I Order”**

In early 1993, at the instigation of the United States, the International Atomic Energy Agency asked for a “special inspection” of the nuclear development by the DPRK, to be specific, a “special inspection” of military sites. Simultaneously, the United States announced that it would resume the Team Spirit war game with south Korea. These developments once again drove the situation on the Korean peninsula to the brink of war.

The whole world watched with deep apprehension, to see how the DPRK would cope with the grave situation.

The atmosphere in the operations rooms of the General Staff of the Korean People’s Army was highly charged. One night a telephone rang. The chief of the General Staff held the handset. It was Kim Jong Il, inquiring into the state of combat readiness of the units of the army. Then he said, laughing, **“Let’s try and lead the Americans by the nose this time.”**

The atmosphere in the room was transformed in an instant.

*The Supreme Commander has already made a world-shaking decision,* thought the officers in the room.

At 17:00 o’clock on March 8, one day before the war game

entered the dress-rehearsal stage, an order from the KPA Supreme Commander was issued:

**“Our people are not frightened by the Team Spirit joint military exercise that involves hundreds of thousands of men and weapons of mass destruction, and our army will not shrink for fear of war.**

**“...**

**“The enemy must clearly understand that he shall not trample with impunity upon an inch of land or a blade of grass in the DPRK.**

**“In view of the grave situation prevailing in our country owing to the schemes of the US imperialists and the south Korean puppets to provoke another war, and as self-defensive measures to safeguard the security of our Republic and people, I order the following:**

**1. The whole country, all the people and the entire army shall, on March 9, 1993, switch to a state of readiness for war.**

**2. All the soldiers of the three services of the Korean People’s Army—the land, naval and air forces—and of the Korean People’s Security Forces, and all the members of the Worker-Peasant Red Guards and the Young Red Guards shall display high revolutionary vigilance and closely observe every move by the enemy, and shall be fully ready for action to crush the enemy at a stroke should he attack.**

**3. All the people shall equip themselves fully with our Party’s Juche view on war and, with a hammer or a sickle in one hand and a rifle in the other, produce a great upswing in socialist economic construction.”**

The enemy was frightened by the resolve of Kim Jong Il, who responded to a hard line with a harder line and was unperturbed in the face of any forces however formidable. The enemy troops wound up the Team Spirit 93 joint military exercise ahead of schedule and went back home in a hurry.

## **Ours Is Not Empty Talk**

In early January 2003, the International Atomic Energy Agency, instigated by the United States, convened a special session of its Board of Governors and picked another quarrel with the DPRK, accusing it of violating the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and safeguards agreement. The session went as far as adopting a “resolution,” which stated that the DPRK must implement the safeguards agreement, give up its “nuclear programme” immediately and in a verifiable way, re-freeze its defrozen nuclear facilities and allow the permanent presence of the agency’s inspectors. The director general of the agency was so insolent as to send a so-called ultimatum, in which he notified the DPRK that his organization would bring the issue to the UN Security Council and impose sanctions against the country if it failed to implement the resolution within a few weeks. This was part of the US strategy to internationalize the DPRK’s “nuclear issue” and ultimately stifle it.

To this, the DPRK Government responded with a statement, which reads in part:

First, now that the United States has unilaterally abandoned its assurances against the nuclear threat and the hostile Korea policy pursuant to the June 11, 1993 DPRK-US Joint Statement, the DPRK Government declares that the withdrawal from the NPT, which it had decided unilaterally “to suspend as long as it considers necessary” in the same statement, will come into effect automatically and immediately.

Second, the DPRK Government, since it has withdrawn from the NPT, declares that it is no more subject to the safeguards agreement with the IAEA, pursuant to Article 3 of the treaty.

The statement elicited yells of horror from some parts of the world and admiration and support from others.

The next day, on January 11, Kim Jong Il met some officials. Showing them the world's response to the statement, he said, **“By declaring our withdrawal from the NPT, we demonstrated to the United States and its followers that our warning that we would not tolerate the slightest violation of our sovereignty or degrading of our dignity was not empty talk.”**

He then ordered a series of measures that would deliver a knockout blow to the enemy.

A spokesman for the DPRK Ministry of Foreign Affairs made a statement just before the session of the UN Security Council.

“If the UN Security Council is misused ultimately for the implementation of the US hostile policy towards the DPRK, we publicly declare that we will be obliged to possess a war deterrent by enlisting all the potentialities of the country.”

It was clear to everyone what was the meaning of the words *war deterrent*.

If a resolution or a president's statement on imposing sanctions is adopted, the DPRK's “nuclear issue” will never be settled, and so the best way is face-to-face talks between the DPRK and the USA—this was the opinion expressed at the UN Security Council. And it closed without adopting any resolution.

## **Launch of Kwangmyongsong No. 2**

Having entered the ranks of countries possessing satellites by sending its own Kwangmyongsong No.1 into orbit at the first launch in August 1998, Korea announced that it would launch Kwangmyongsong No. 2 in April 2009.

Japan responded by making it national policy to intercept the Korean satellite if it was launched.

The following was Korea's answer:

1. If Japan dares to “intercept” our peaceful satellite, our People's

Army will deal a resolute retaliatory blow without any mercy not only at the already deployed means of interception but at other major targets.

2. As the United States has made clear its stand with regard to our launch of a peaceful satellite, it must withdraw the troops it has deployed, to avoid any harm coming to them.

3. The puppet war hawks in south Korea must not kowtow to their US and Japanese masters or act to hinder the launch of our satellite, the pride of our nation.

Our revolutionary armed forces remain in a state of full combat readiness to cope with the prevailing grave situation, and if the hostile forces make the slightest move to “intercept” our peaceful satellite, they will immediately face a retaliatory blow of justice.

At long last, the launch vehicle Unha-2 carrying Kwangmyongsong No. 2 took off, giving off a shower of flames. The flag of the DPRK was shining on the vehicle.

Japan, which had been claiming that it would “intercept” the multi-stage rocket, did nothing.

Launched at 11:20, on April 5, 2009, at the Tonghae Launch Site in the northeastern part of the country, the vehicle inserted the satellite into orbit after nine minutes and two seconds.

Kim Jong Il watched the whole process of the satellite launch at the Satellite Control Centre, and expressed satisfaction, saying:

Today we have launched a satellite wonderfully. When we declared that we would launch a peaceful trial communications satellite, the United States and its followers made a fuss as if something ominous was about to happen, claiming that they would “intercept” it and impose “sanctions” against us if we launched it. In particular, the Japanese reactionaries declared it their national policy to “intercept” our launch vehicle. Had they attempted to “intercept” it when we were launching it, we would have dealt with not only the interception base but also other major targets.

## 9. ATTRACTION

### **Kimjongilia**

There are many flowers that draw people's attention with their beauty and fragrance.

Among them is a flower that attracts special attention; it is the Kimjongilia. With its unusually large and broad-blown flowers, crimson petals, heart-shaped green leaves that give a fresh and robust feeling—the rare cultivar of the genus *Begonia* is the most beautiful among all the cultivars of the genus, and its flowers bloom for 120 days at a time.

Kamo Mototeru, a Japanese floriculturist, bred a new flower and wanted to name it after a defender of peace and justice, an architect of a beautiful future for mankind and an outstanding man who commanded the respect of all people. After studying the world and reading biographies of great persons, he decided to name his creation after the Korean leader Kim Jong Il. He wrote a letter to him.

“I send you the tuberous begonia I bred. I ventured to name my plant after Your Excellency's august name, as the Kimjongilia, to wish you a long life in good health and a bright future of prosperity and development. If you allow me to present this plant to Your Excellency, I will take it as a greater honour than I deserve. I sincerely wish Your Excellency a long life in good health. February 13, 1988. Kamo Mototeru”

The Kimjongilia won people's admiration and applause immediately after it was born. It won the special prize and the gold medal at the 12<sup>th</sup> International Flower Show held in Bratislava,

Czechoslovakia in May 1991, the top prize at the Horticultural Exposition held in Jilin, China, in August 1997, the Grand Prize at the 1999 Kunming International Horticultural Exposition, and the specially instituted gold prize for exhibition at the 2011 Xian International Horticultural Exposition.

The flower has been propagated on a worldwide scale. Such organizations as the Kimjongilia association and Kimjongilia appreciation society have been formed in many countries and regions of the world. Many cities have hosted major Kimjongilia shows.

People say that when they see the flower, they feel as if they are looking at the rising sun, and it deserved to be named after a great man.

### **Admiration of Sukarno**

President Kim Il Sung visited Indonesia in April 1965 to attend the celebration of the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the First Conference of Asian and African Nations (known as the Bandung Conference). After attending the celebration events in Bandung, he was scheduled to look round the Bogor Botanical Garden, which is far away from Bandung. But the departure time was changed. The Korean officials accompanying Kim Il Sung were surprised, before being informed that it was a measure President Sukarno had taken in person for the personal security of their leader.

A story is associated with this event.

That morning Sukarno was informed by the head of his bodyguards that Korea's "young commander" was going to leave for Bogor as part of an advance party. The day before, when the celebration events were to be held, the young Korean man had inspected the streets and the surroundings at dawn before taking detailed measures for guarding the personal security of Kim Il Sung.

And that day he was planning to leave for the next destination in advance.

Moved by this, Sukarno decided to take personal command of the Korean leader's security. First he changed the time of the latter's departure for Bogor. According to his assistants, it was the first time he had even taken command of an event in this way.

At the banquet held to mark his visit to Indonesia, Kim Il Sung expressed his deep gratitude to Sukarno for his hospitality, especially for assuming command of his personal security—even using a wireless microphone.

Sukarno said, shaking his head, “The gratitude should go to your ‘young commander.’ Excuse me, but can you tell me his official position?”

Kim Il Sung replied, laughing heartily, that he was his chief aide in charge of his security and that he was under the thumb of his chief aide.

Struck with admiration, Sukarno gave a thumbs-up to the Korean leader as a sign of envy.

In his twenties, Kim Jong Il had already won the admiration of Sukarno, a man with a strong sense of self-respect who was a famous veteran head of state.

### **Deng Yingchao Sheds Tears**

In June 1983, while on a visit to China, Kim Jong Il called on Deng Yingchao, widow of Zhou Enlai and chair of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference.

Saying that he would offer her a formal greeting, Kim Jong Il got up from his seat, as an expression of his respect for the veteran revolutionary. Deng Yingchao stood up, too, and said repeatedly that they should both sit and talk. As Kim Jong Il would not sit down, Deng Yingchao said she would talk to him, standing. So,

Kim Jong Il asked her to sit down. At Deng Yingchao's repeated request, Kim Jong Il took his seat, and said:

**“When I was leaving for China, President Kim Il Sung asked me to convey his warm greetings to you, Comrade Deng Yingchao. He was concerned about your health, as you're advanced in age.”**

Deng Yingchao had visited Korea four years previously. President Kim Il Sung had personally received her at the airport. At the banquet held in her honour, the President made a speech, and went with her as far as Hamhung to attend the unveiling ceremony of a statue of her husband Zhou Enlai at the Hungnam Fertilizer Complex. Unable to contain her joy and delight at seeing her most intimate revolutionary comrade-in-arms again, she had repeatedly expressed her gratitude to President Kim Il Sung.

To Deng Yingchao, who was recalling those days with deep emotion, Kim Jong Il said that Zhou Enlai had been a great revolutionary, adding that he had done much for the friendship between China and Korea.

“I'm delighted that President Kim Il Sung, who is the great leader of the Korean people and an intimate friend of the Chinese people, still cherishes the feeling of friendship with Zhou Enlai and is concerned for me. I'll remember forever what you have just said,” said Deng Yingchao, shedding tears.

The scene was so moving that the Chinese interpreter was unable to speak, and so the Korean interpreter interpreted her words instead.

Time passed, and Kim Jong Il had to leave. Before he left the room he said repeatedly that they should take their leave, but Deng Yingchao insisted on seeing him off outside, saying that she could not see such a dear guest off inside.

Bidding farewell to Kim Jong Il in the garden, Deng Yingchao said earnestly, holding his hands, “It is most auspicious that you have visited my house. I wish you will come frequently to see me.”

She stood there for a long time, until Kim Jong Il's car had disappeared.

### **A Soviet Marshal Becomes Kim Jong Il's Disciple**

Dmitry Yazov, Defence Minister and Marshal of the former Soviet Union, is well versed in military affairs. He is called a "military encyclopaedia."

During the Soviet era, he once surprised his US counterpart. During talks with US Defence Secretary Frank Carlucci, the subject of the American Civil War came up. He told the American which battle had been fought in which way, which general played which role and the strategic merits and demerits of the two belligerent forces. Carlucci was surprised that the Russian was better informed than himself, the US Defence Secretary, of the Civil War, and described the Soviet Defence Minister as a "military encyclopaedia."

Yazov was proud of being called this.

One day in July 1998, during a visit to Korea, he met Kim Jong Il. The Korean leader went to the guesthouse where he was staying.

**"How do you do? I'm glad to see you."**

"How do you do, respected Comrade Kim Jong Il? I've long wanted to see you. Thanks to your warm affection and solicitude, I'm as fit as a fiddle."

Smiling broadly, Kim Jong Il posed with him for a photograph and then talked with him. The conversation lasted for nearly five hours. They talked mainly about military affairs.

Kim Jong Il's profound military knowledge struck the Russian with wonder. He was familiar with not only a single arm or a service but all the arms of all the services, with the cutting-edge technology of modern military science and equipment, with the strategy and tactics of modern warfare, and even with combat action—in fact, with every military sphere.

Yazov, taken aback by Kim Jong Il's military wisdom and talent, said:

“Today I've graduated from a military academy. Your wide-ranging military vision and profound knowledge beat me. You're a giant not only in statesmanship but also in the military field. Let me become your disciple.”

### **Kim Dae Jung's Genuine Feeling**

South Korean President Kim Dae Jung, on his way back home after winding up the historic inter-Korean summit on June 15, 2000, was moved by the fact that Chairman Kim Jong Il of the National Defence Commission of the DPRK was sharing a car with him and going to see him off at the airport, just as he had done when he arrived at Pyongyang.

In the car, Kim Jong Il said:

We published the North-South Joint Declaration after our summit, thus taking a big step towards the reunification of the country. You, President Kim, were an opposition figure in the past, but today, as president, you have performed a great deed which no previous south Korean presidents dared to do. So your heart will be full of emotion. In this sense, yours can be called a successful career.

Kim Dae Jung replied.

“Yes. I think it my greatest good fortune to have met you, Chairman Kim Jong Il, in person during this visit. I've adorned the twilight of my life beautifully. I've nothing more to envy.”

The three days and two nights he spent in Pyongyang are but a moment in his life, which was full of ups and downs. That moment painted his entire life with beauty. Kim Jong Il added brilliance to it.

After signing the North-South Joint Declaration, he had gathered his entourage at the guesthouse where he was staying, and said:

Chairman Kim Jong Il is really a great man. He is full of humanity. He is trustworthy, so that I want to work with him. He is great today, and his future will be brighter. Having met such a passionate and vigorous man, I'm confident not only in the prospects for the north but also in the bright future of the Korean nation.

As he was about to leave Pyongyang, Kim Dae Jung said to Kim Jong Il:

“My political programme is not worth mentioning. I'm old, and my presidential term expires two years and eight months from now. So the future depends entirely on you. I wish that you'll deal with all affairs well for the sake of the destiny of the nation.”

### **Albright's Brooch**

In late October 2000, a 200-strong delegation from the United States led by Secretary of State Madeleine Albright visited Pyongyang. The mere fact that the Secretary of State of the United States, which claimed that it was the “only superpower,” was visiting Pyongyang for the first time in the history of the relations between the two countries, was enough to strike the world with wonder. As the hours went by, the world, which was keeping a watchful eye on her actions, was struck with a greater wonder: she was seen to change her brooches several times, seeming to indicate variations in her psychological state.

On the day of her arrival, she was wearing a brooch with the design of the Stars and Stripes. Albright had a reputation for delivering a “delicate political message” to and skillfully handling her dialogue partners by means of different types of brooches. This brooch was a symbol of the “dignity” of the United States.

The next day Kim Jong Il held talks with her. He provided

clear answers and conclusions to all her questions concerning DPRK-US relations, complex and sensitive international issues, the situation in the Asia-Pacific region and on the Korean peninsula, and the missile issue, which was of greatest concern to the United States.

Albright explicitly expressed her admiration for her dialogue partner, as if she had forgotten that she was having formal talks, saying that Kim Jong Il's clear-cut answers were really fascinating. These words were not an expression of diplomatic etiquette but spoken from her heart. As a token of her feelings, she wore a heart-shaped brooch at a banquet she hosted in honour of Kim Jong Il. This brooch was a symbol of her respect and admiration for her dialogue partner.

Charles Kartman, who was a member of her entourage and a special envoy to the Korean peninsula peace talks, said that the Secretary of State was very satisfied with the result of her visit to Pyongyang and in particular she was fascinated by Kim Jong Il.

In the report that she submitted to President Clinton after her return home, Albright wrote:

Kim Jong Il is completely different from the type we have so far imagined. His theory is systematic and logical. He is not only well versed in the current complicated international issues but also correct in his analysis and judgement of the issues, and broad-minded, magnanimous and clear-cut in dealing with all affairs. It is entertaining to have talks with Kim Jong Il, for he listens to his dialogue partner to the last in a prudent manner and with great attention, and shows himself to be magnanimous. It is, accordingly, inevitable to be drawn deep into his theories and assertions during negotiations. All in all, I could not but admit that Kim Jong Il is a leader, clear in theory in the political, economic, cultural, military, diplomatic and all other wide-ranging fields, definite in confidence, broad-minded, meticulous and many-sided.

Albright was with Kim Jong Il for 14 hours during her short

sojourn in Pyongyang. When she appeared at the airport at the start of her return home, she wore a cowboy-shaped brooch, the symbol of peace, which was glittering in the sunlight.

### **A Gift from Putin**

In February 2003, a ceremony was held at the Russian embassy in Pyongyang to convey a congratulatory message and a gift from President Putin to Kim Jong Il. The ceremony was attended by Kim Jong Il in person.

The gift was three Orlov stallions, a special Russian breed of horse that is well-known around the world as one of the best race horses, thanks to its intelligence, bravery and strength.

Russia takes strict measures to prevent Orlov stallions spreading around the world.

As such they were an expression of exceptional favour from the Russian president to his Korean counterpart.

The story goes back to mid-January, when Russia proposed sending its Vice Foreign Minister to Pyongyang as a presidential envoy to discuss the Korean nuclear issue, which was a focus of global attention because of Korea's withdrawal from the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

Kim Jong Il approved the proposal, and spared the time to meet the Russian envoy.

He clarified the essence of the "nuclear issue" on the Korean peninsula, Korea's principled and invariable stand on this issue and the reasonable solution to it, so that the Russian envoy could form a correct understanding of the issue.

Deeply impressed by his remarkable acumen, outstanding wisdom, iron will and courage, the veteran Russian diplomat, on his return to Moscow, conveyed to his president what Kim Jong Il had said.

Having already got to know the Korean leader at meetings in

Pyongyang, Moscow and Vladivostok, President Putin decided to present him with a congratulatory message and Orlov stallions.

At the ceremony, the Russian ambassador said to Kim Jong Il that the white Orlov stallions bore Putin's wish for Kim Jong Il's victory and success in his work, adding that it was customary in Russia for a triumphant general to ride a white horse.

The Russians who had escorted the horses said that on their president's order, they had tried very hard to select the finest pure-bred Orlov stallions, which are a breed unique to Russia, and those of an age most suitable for acclimatizing to a new environment. They added that, after selecting them, they had tended them as best as they could. They then explained that they had been tending horses for a long time, but this was the first time they had carried out such an honourable task.

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