

A Political Committee Meeting Turns into a Parents Meeting

Kim Il Sung (1912-1994), who is respected by the Korean people as the founding father of socialist Korea, always directed close attention to providing good conditions of education to children.

The following happened in early June 1969.

Although it was a Sunday, Kim Il Sung gave on-site guidance all day long. It was only at twilight he could find time for strolling. During the walk, however, his eyes were riveted on a document on the construction of schools.

Those years the Democratic People's Republic of Korea was still experiencing difficulties. The situation of the country was tenser than ever before because of the moves of the hostile forces for another war and it had to wrap up socialist industrialization within one or two years.

This being the situation, the officials in the sectors of economic planning and education had seriously discussed one issue—a lack of classrooms. The number of the children of school age had decreased in the wake of the Fatherland Liberation War (1950-1953). The number, however, had increased after the war. According to a rough estimation, thousands of classrooms were urgently needed. But the finance, building materials and manpower were not sufficient enough.

After repeated discussion they had decided to introduce a two-shift system of using the existing classrooms and presented the relevant document to the Cabinet.

Kim Il Sung read the document both in his office and during the stroll with a heavy heart.

Having concluded that the school construction was an issue of paramount significance which brooked no further delay, Kim Il Sung convened a meeting of the Political Committee of the WPK Central Committee the next day. The meeting discussed several measures presented by the experts.

After attentively listening to the discussions Kim Il Sung explained the pressing nature of the issue of building schools with detailed data and numbers.

He said: We should not try to solve the issue by building just hundreds of classrooms or by provisional methods; the principled and fundamental way of

solving the issue is to build new classrooms through the joint effort of all the people; I am against the introduction of a two-shift system or other stopgap measure; we should build schools even if it would cost the whole of the national treasury; let's decide on building ten thousand classrooms.

He then suggested the ways for building ten thousand classrooms.

By the end of the meeting he said: We are parents of students; today's meeting is as good as a parents meeting; we should all go at the work with a sincere mind for posterity.

One summer day of that year Kim Il Sung asked his driver to stop the car on his way from a field guidance trip when he saw some children going back home after school.

He got off the car and called them to him. And he asked them what school they were attending, what grade they were in and where they lived.

Then he asked a child to open his school bag and examined a pencil case, textbooks and notebooks.

He praised the child for his clean textbooks and excellent handwriting. And he asked whether they studied in group at home and what was the merit of studying in group.

Some children answered that they could learn from each other and others said they could share textbooks.

A political committee meeting held some time later discussed the issue of textbooks for students.

At the meeting Kim Il Sung said: We should ensure that textbooks are made with quality paper even if we have to postpone the printing of other publications. Then he took the measure of organizing preparatory committees for new school year with leading officials from the capital, provinces, cities and counties.

Since then the sound of children reading books and singing songs resounded more loudly across the country.