

KIM JONG IL

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GYMNASTICS AND ARTISTIC
PERFORMANCE *ARIRANG* IS A
WORLD-CLASS MASTERPIECE
REPRESENTATIVE
OF THE NEW CENTURY**

WORKING PEOPLE OF THE WHOLE WORLD, UNITE!

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Talk to Officials After Enjoying the Grand Mass Gymnastics and
Artistic Performance *Arirang*, a winner of the Kim Il Sung Prize
August 15, Juche 91 (2002)

The closing performance of *Arirang* was excellent. This is the third time for me to see the performance. The more I see it, the more appealing it is, and each time I feel sure that it is a masterpiece.

The mass gymnastics and artistic performance *Arirang* created on the occasion of the 90th birth anniversary of President Kim Il Sung and the 70th anniversary of the founding of the Korean People's Army can be called a work representative of the new century. It is a source of pride that the excellent cultural and artistic work *Arirang* representative of the new century was created in our country.

Our creative workers and performers, in the noble patriotic spirit to demonstrate to the world the might of Juche Korea, created in a grand way this monumental cultural and artistic work of the era of the Workers' Party of Korea, which vividly reflects the spirit and stamina of Korea, in only one year by working intensively. They also achieved historic exploits which will be etched in the history of our country by staging performances for four successive months with unflagging ardour and in fighting spirit.

I highly appreciate their achievements and extend thanks to them on behalf of the Central Committee of the WPK, the National Defence Commission of the DPRK, the Presidium of the Supreme People's Assembly and the Government of the DPRK.

Arirang, as a successful work of Juche-oriented culture and art, is a precious national treasure which will be handed down to posterity and a world-class masterpiece. While the mass gymnastics and artistic performance *Ever-Victorious Workers' Party of Korea* created on the occasion of the 55th anniversary of the founding of the WPK is the acme of the renaissance of the 20th century, *Arirang* is an exemplary work representative of the

21st century. These two works are revolutionary masterpieces symbolic of the Songun era.

Through *Arirang* we can see that a great era creates a great history.

I gave the task of creating a mass gymnastics and artistic performance in a fresh way by linking the question of the Korean nation's destiny with the history of the Korean revolution, with *Arirang*, a folk song of the Korean nation, as its seed and under the title *Arirang*. *Arirang* of sorrow and tears representing the Korean nation's history of ordeals has developed in our era into *Arirang* of Songun and *Arirang* of prosperity overflowing with national pride, optimism and revolutionary spirit. Our creative workers and performers created and completed the work as a masterpiece of the era by portraying the past, present and future of the Korean nation to the highest ideological and artistic standards in accordance with the Party's intention.

Arirang is so perfect in its composition that its ideological and thematic content can be grasped easily and so rich in its portrayal that it is fully understandable without any explanation. *Arirang* is a ten-out-of-ten work, which gives the audience a strong impression while keeping them in suspense from beginning to end. *Arirang* is a flawless, successful work, which leaves nothing to be desired.

In the prelude the title *Arirang* appears while the bright sun is rising in the background and dancers in golden costumes emerge. The portrayal is solemn and yet elegant.

In the scene *Crossing the Tuman River*, the female singer from the Mansudae Art Troupe sings *The Tuman River Filled with Tears* well in our own way. I said that such famous songs as *With a Single Heart*, *The Tuman River Filled with Tears* and *We Are One* should be made effective use of in creating *Arirang*. These songs, which accord with the requirements of the era and the feelings and emotions of the Korean people, are rendered excellently in our own way.

In the scene *Star of Korea*, the morning star shines, rises slowly, and then a fire kindles in the cauldron of the stadium. This scene was created splendidly.

In the scene *My Motherland*, with the melody of the song *Nostalgia* playing, the forests on Mt. Paektu flow past on the backdrop. This depiction by means of large-scale projectors is special. When the song is replaced by *The Glorious Motherland*, the panels of the background delineate the flag of the Republic, and at the same time the dancers in the performance area form the flag of the Republic on the ground with elegant dance movements. This scene is splendid.

The scene *Our Weapons* describes President Kim Il Sung's achievements in army building in a condensed way by employing the technique of jumping from one period to another. It was well conceived.

Very high are the standards of performance by the children who perform in the scene *Laugh Heartily*. The children, in colourful national costumes, skip rope very well in front of the gymnastic ranks. I am told that they were from the Ponbu Kindergarten in Sinuiju. I am proud of them. Looking at the children and students performing in the mass gymnastics and artistic performance, I felt encouraged as I thought, I live to bring happiness to you and you live because you are taken care of by me. We must work hard for the future. I am told that the foreign visitors as well as the Korean people were struck with admiration by this scene.

The scene *The Creation of a New World* was well depicted. It is portrayed well artistically, and the mass gymnastics were rendered well, too. Mass gymnastics should be done in this way. It was a good idea for domestic animals to be depicted on the backdrop by laser illumination in the scene *My Flourishing Country*. It is appealing that at the end of the scene a large-scale peasant dance was performed. The dancers skilfully twirled short, medium and long

sangmo (a decorative tassel on the cap-Tr.) while they danced. Recently, I have stressed that the traditional *sangmo* dance should be encouraged, and my intention was reflected properly in the work.

In the scene *Higher and Faster* young students forming a five-storeyed human pyramid perform as well as professional acrobats do. The gymnastics in this scene is very spectacular.

The soldiers who perform in the scene *People's Army* show the might of the KPA in an outstanding way. Martial arts performed by female soldiers are enjoyable, and the sight of parachuting female soldiers appearing on the backdrop is also good. The scale of representation is bigger than the scene of the People's Army depicted in the mass gymnastics and artistic performance created in celebration of the 55th anniversary of the founding of the WPK.

The scene *Isonnam Falls* is beautiful and splendid. I am told that the majority of the performers are female working youths and girl students. They dance as well as professional dancers.

The acrobatics in the scene *Beautiful Land of Happiness* are excellent. It is depicted in a fresher and a better way than I thought.

The scene *With a Single Heart* is spectacular. The song *With a Single Heart* is rendered well both emotionally and artistically. The scene looks gorgeous because of the concentrated use of laser illuminations and other lighting equipment.

The scene *Arirang of Reunification* is marvellous. The scene of reunification is very impressive. It is good that the song *Arirang* resounds again in the scene and the newly-created song *We Are One* concludes the scene. This idea of the creative workers is laudable.

The finale, *Arirang of Prosperity*, is also portrayed well. The finale is indeed fascinating.

As a whole, the mass gymnastics and artistic performance *Arirang* reflected truthfully the history of our nation and its

aspiration for the future through every act and scene, and was created so perfectly that it plucked the heartstrings of the audience. This work expressed intensively the history of our nation and our revolution. The creative workers and performers must have made great efforts to re-create several chapters and scenes in a fresh way.

Arirang is a successful work, which has broken a new ground for the development of human culture and art by sustaining the styles of the mass gymnastics and the artistic performance while combining them harmoniously.

Our creative workers and artistes, in line with the intention of the Party to create a new form of cultural and artistic work by combining gymnastics with art, combined mass gymnastics and artistic performance into a harmonious whole by sustaining the characteristics of artistic performance and the features of mass gymnastics. That mass gymnastics must not resemble art performance means that a work which is neither mass gymnastics nor artistic performance must not be created. A work which combines mass gymnastics and artistic performance should be created, like *Arirang*. Then the work will sustain the characteristics of both mass gymnastics and artistic performance. This is what I mean. By achieving a harmonious combination of forceful and invigorating mass gymnastics with beautiful, elegant and fascinating artistic performance, *Arirang* gives the audience an impression they have not felt before. Mass gymnastics or artistic performance, individually, cannot achieve success as great as *Arirang*. Foreigners who enjoyed *Arirang* were struck with wonder by the combination of gymnastics with art, and spoke highly of it. Our creative workers and performers have fully met the Party's demand for creating a work which combines gymnastics with art.

Arirang is a monumental masterpiece created in conformity with the requirements of the new century by introducing new and characteristic means and techniques of representation.

The work is not only good in content and large in scale, but everything, like costume and backdrop, is new, colourful, invigorating and emotional. Particularly noteworthy is the fact that the backdrop has become large-scale, symbolic and rhythmic, improving the ideological and artistic qualities of the work and organized character of the performers. Also, new means of description, like laser illumination and extra-large-sized projected screens—products of the latest science and technology—have been developed and introduced to positively contribute to creating a world-class masterpiece that meets the requirements of the new century. Our creative workers, scientists and technicians solved in our own way the problem of making active use of modern technologies like laser and electric illumination, in creating the work in line with the requirements of the era of science and technology.

Arirang is a manifestation of the high revolutionary spirit, sense of organization and discipline and level of cultural attainments of our people, and a symbol of their single-hearted unity.

It is not easy to get the performers numbering 100 000 to move as one in a mass gymnastics and artistic performance. The secret of how the 100 000 students and working youths, not soldiers, could create one rhythmic stream according to one scenario lies in their high revolutionary consciousness and strong sense of unity, organization and discipline. The creative workers, artistes, working youths and students are excellent, indeed. Through this performance, our artistes and students demonstrated that they are loyal to the Party and the revolution, and very strong in their sense of unity, organization and discipline. Though several problems have arisen among artistes and the younger generation in other countries, our artistes and young people are being educated and trained in a revolutionary way. This is a laudable thing. While seeing the performance by artistes and students, one can realize that the ranks of our artistes are being prepared as revolutionary, militant ranks and

our young people are developing into a revolutionary generation which will shoulder the future of the motherland, and that the course of creation of the work is the course of training and educating them in a revolutionary way.

Looking at the performance, what I felt with happiness was that the talented performers are almost all working youths and students. To see them presenting all the scenes of the work, the acme of art, I felt proud of them. That most of the performers are students as well as young people working in factories in Pyongyang and the countryside means that their skills are not inferior to those of professionals and that the general standards of their cultural attainment are very high.

Whoever enjoys the mass gymnastics and artistic performance will feel refreshed and inspired with fresh strength and ardour. The informative and educational effectiveness of *Arirang* is incomparably greater than that of any other kind of cultural or artistic work or tens of millions of texts for public lectures. Indeed, *Arirang* demonstrated to the whole world the invincible might of socialist Korea and the inexhaustible strength and wisdom of the Korean people led by the WPK.

I made sure that not only the Pyongyang citizens and foreigners but soldiers at important posts—airmen and soldiers at frontline posts—and workers and other working people in such labour-consuming sectors as coal and ore mines enjoyed *Arirang*. *Arirang* was first scheduled to be staged until the end of June, but at the constant requests of the service persons and other people the period of performance was prolonged and a chartered “Arirang” train was made available for the people who live far away from Pyongyang.

Korean people and soldiers, overseas Koreans and foreigners totalling four million enjoyed *Arirang*, and their impressions were very good.

The mass gymnastics and artistic performance *Arirang* instilled confidence in victory and national pride in the hearts of

our soldiers and other people with its great influence, and it served as a powerful propellant for national reunification and the building of a great, prosperous and powerful country.

We should preserve *Arirang* as a precious treasure of the Korean nation and, based on the successes and experiences gained while creating *Arirang*, further develop our Juche-oriented culture and art as required by the Songun era.