

WORKING PEOPLE OF THE WHOLE WORLD, UNITE!

KIM JONG IL

IN CREATION AND CONSTRUCTION KNOWLEDGE IS THE GREATEST WEALTH AND IGNORANCE IS THE GREATEST POVERTY

Talk to Senior Officials of the Central Committee
of the Workers' Party of Korea
April 30, 2006

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We should ensure that our people work steadily to raise their level of knowledge.

Knowledge is a powerful weapon in transforming nature and society. As the saying goes, “Knowledge is power,” and one can work more effectively only when one has a wealth of knowledge of nature and society. Knowledge, as well as ideological consciousness, is a prerequisite for the independent and creative activities people conduct to transform nature and society. Knowledge teaches them how to open a blocked road, whereas ignorance blinds them to the open road ahead. This is why it is said that knowledge is light and ignorance is darkness. In creation and construction, knowledge is the greatest wealth and ignorance is the greatest poverty.

The need to steadily raise people’s level of knowledge is all the more pressing in the present era of science and technology, the IT era. Science and technology are currently developing at a rapid pace, and the role they are playing in the realms of social progress and social life is bigger than ever before. Every country is focusing on the development of science and technology. Labour in the IT era is being

put on a more intelligent and technical footing, and almost all material and cultural wealth is being created by highly-developed science and technology. In the present era of science and technology, the IT era, without raising your knowledge level you cannot do anything as required by the trend of the times or contribute to building a civilized, wealthy society. A wealth of knowledge promotes the development of a country, whereas poverty of knowledge leads to its decline.

The fact is that our people's current level of knowledge is failing to measure up to the demands of the times and of the developing revolution. If they abide by the conventional knowledge and experience at a time when science and technology are developing rapidly, they cannot perform the responsibilities and tasks they have assumed for the times and revolution properly, nor can they make a genuine contribution to society and the collective. Gone are the days when they could work with conventional knowledge and experience. Those, who feel satisfied with their present knowledge or pretend to know what they do not, will fall behind.

The level of knowledge of our officials, the leading personnel of the revolution, is also failing to keep pace

with the development of science and technology. Some of them are not proactive in mastering advanced technology and are attempting to work with the knowledge they learned many years ago. Their knowledge dates from the 1960s and 70s. It is virtually useless in the practical conditions of today, when science and technology are developing at an unimaginable speed. This being the case, there are few officials who are capable of conducting a scientific analysis of the problems arising in the revolution and construction, in order to solve them.

We are faced with the heavy yet honourable task of building a powerful socialist country as soon as possible by vigorously stepping up the general march of the Songun revolution. This is a cause our people must achieve for themselves by dint of modern science and technology. Without modern science and technology, they cannot build a powerful socialist country. They should all learn, learn and learn more so as to possess a high level of knowledge.

To raise their level of knowledge, they should study diligently and work with passion. Knowledge is the fruit of diligent study and passionate effort. The most talented people build the tower of knowledge through diligent and passionate study. Knowledge is not

something that can be inherited. Just as the son of a revolutionary does not automatically become a revolutionary, so the son of someone with a doctorate does not automatically earn a doctorate. I have heard that an able medical doctor enrolled his son in medical school, but the son's academic performance was poor as he lacked the attitude of exploring and learning medical science and technology. At a higher level than him are the sons and daughters of ordinary people who study diligently and with passion. The case is similar with the children of the famous creative workers and artistes who are studying at the Pyongyang University of Music and Dance, I have been told. Knowledge can be ceaselessly acquired and enriched only through diligent study and passionate effort. Science and technology, as a wealth shared by humankind, develop and propel social progress from one generation to the next. But they are not passed on from the preceding generations to the coming ones. A low level of knowledge is not something inherited; everyone can have a high level of knowledge if they buckle down to acquiring it with determination. Some officials and ordinary working people who did not graduate from university are presenting inventions and new concepts which are beyond the imagination of scientists and

technicians; others are performing with credit the tasks entrusted to them. They are able to do so because they have steadily raised the level of their knowledge by studying hard with a burning passion. Officials and working people should not waste any time, but read books and study diligently in every spare moment so as to master modern science and technology, as well as specialist and general knowledge in various fields.

A book is a silent teacher that imparts knowledge and awakens people to the truth. Only by reading a lot of books can one acquire wide-ranging and profound knowledge. However, our people are not reading books. In the past, many people could be seen reading on their way to and from work. But this is no longer the case. Everyone should have a book in their hand not only on their way to and from work, but also during breaks from labour or on their days off. In this way, they can make the most of their time by reading books. They should make reading part of their daily life and habit.

They should study substantially and persistently. If they study in the same way as they lick the surface of a watermelon, what they learn is worthless, and they will have wasted their time. In whatever they are learning, they should delve into it and gain a clear

understanding of its essence. Thus they should strive continually to acquire knowledge that is helpful in their practical work.

In creating a revolutionary climate of studying, officials, as the leading personnel of the revolution, should set an example and make exacting demands on others. This is the only way to establish such a climate throughout society. Studying is the primary duty of revolutionaries. If they are negligent in studying, they cannot perform their revolutionary tasks properly or work at their posts. They should all study diligently to raise their level of knowledge and their abilities.

Party and working people's organizations should pay close attention to ensuring that a revolutionary climate of studying permeates society. They should make exacting demands so that no one can avoid studying, and they should discover a correct methodology for creating a revolutionary climate of studying.

We need to pay close attention to educational work. The conditions in our country for everyone to study are sufficient. There are many universities and colleges in the capital city and regions, and well-knit systems for studying-while-you-work and continuous education have been established. The point is to

improve the quality of education. We should raise the quality of education in line with the demands of the new era, the IT era. Only then can we bring up talented individuals capable of shouldering the building of a powerful socialist country.

In improving the quality of education, raising teachers' qualifications is vital. Their qualifications decide the quality of education. Whether students' level of knowledge is high or not depends largely on their teachers' qualifications. With a high sense of dignity and pride in being career revolutionaries responsible for bringing up talented personnel for the country, teachers should study passionately so as steadily to improve their qualifications.

Teaching methods also need to be improved. In education, efforts should be directed to cultivating students' creative application while teaching them the knowledge they need. Cultivating such abilities is a global trend in the development of education. At present, a significant number of university graduates are failing to display their creative abilities as they should in their work. This is related to our teaching methods. Educational institutions should decisively improve their teaching methods so as to nurture talented personnel who have mastered modern science

and technology and are capable of performing their assignments effectively.

The work of raising people's level of knowledge should be conducted in close combination with practical activities. Practice is the starting point of understanding things and phenomena, and an engine for the development of theory. Through practical activities, people enrich their knowledge and make it pragmatic. By nature, knowledge serves practical activities, and only knowledge combined with practice is useful. Knowledge for its own sake, knowledge that cannot be applied in practice, is useless. Our efforts to raise the level of knowledge across society are aimed not at making them bookworms, but at training them as pillars who have knowledge that can be applied in practice in the revolution and construction. Officials and working people should, by taking part in practical activities and consolidating the knowledge they have learned, raise its level so as to contribute to the revolution and construction.

We should ignite the flame of steadily improving the level of knowledge across society and thus ensure that, through the application of modern science and technology, all our officials and working people add lustre to their Juche-oriented socialist country.

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