

Secret of the Self-supporting Economy of the DPRK

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea advocates building a self-supporting economy. How is it possible to build it?

Spirit of Self-reliance

The spirit of self-reliance is the first factor that promotes the building of a self-supporting economy.

This spirit is rooted in the Juche idea which was created by President Kim Il Sung (1912-1994) and developed by Chairman Kim Jong Il (1942-2011). The Juche idea is, in a word, the idea that man is the master of his own destiny and he also has the strength with which to shape his destiny.

With this idea as the guiding idea, the Korean people have advanced the revolution and construction.

Looking back, the Korean people suffered indescribably severe damages in the Korean war (1950-1953) forced upon them by the US. In the case of the capital city of Pyongyang alone, everything was destroyed to the ground except for a few buildings. The US claimed that Korea would never be able to rise again even in one hundred years.

However, the Korean people completely rehabilitated the country's economy in less than three years and realized socialist industrialization in a matter of 14 years. Later they continuously created world-startling miracles like the building of a 10 000-ton press, large-sized oxygen plants and the West Sea Barrage. A factor for all this was the spirit of self-reliance.

Today, the Korean people are constantly promoting the country's economic development by relying on this spirit, not with the help of others or any external assistance.

Powerful Resources of Skilled Personnel

The DPRK chose the road of self-reliance also in preparing its own powerful resources of skilled personnel.

Soon after the country was liberated (August 15, 1945) from the Japanese

military occupation (1905-1945), there was no university or college in the northern part of the country. The number of native scientists and technicians was ten or so. The cause of this was that the Japanese imperialists had enforced the colonial policy of keeping the Koreans in ignorance.

However, the DPRK has developed education rapidly and trained a great number of native technical personnel with its own efforts over the past seven decades. It introduced universal compulsory elementary education in 1956, universal compulsory secondary education in 1958, and universal 11-year compulsory education in 1975. As a result, by the 1980s, all the working people in the country possessed the general knowledge of a secondary school graduate and the country had over 1.3 million intellectuals and over 230 universities. How much effort the country directed to training its native technical personnel can be seen in the fact that the ratio between the population and intellectuals in the country was 12 to 1 in 1993, whereas it had been 700 000 to 1 immediately after liberation.

Recent years has witnessed continuous development of education in the country. Having extended the period of compulsory education to twelve years by adding another year, it is dynamically pushing forward the work of putting the contents and methods of education on a modern footing. Under the slogan of making all the people well versed in science and technology, the country is striving to turn all the members of society into intelligent workers possessed with the knowledge level of a university graduate, and into developers of science and technology. As a result, the number of holders of academic degrees and masters of invention is rapidly increasing.

What is noteworthy is the fact that all types of education is free and for the sake of the entire population. It is clear that these intellectuals trained under such educational system will reliably support the country's self-supporting economy.

Reliable Foundations of the Economy

Even though its people have strong spirit of self-reliance and it has a powerful force of skilled personnel, it would be a daydream for a country to realize self-sufficiency in the economy without powerful economic foundations.

In this context, the DPRK has always paid close attention to laying reliable and powerful economic foundations.

First, it has created an independent, modern heavy industry. Second, it has expanded a multi-faceted and comprehensive economic structure. Third, it has built its own firm raw materials bases. And fourth, it has equipped all sectors of the economy with modern technology.

All these have proved highly beneficial throughout the history of the country's economic development. After the line of developing heavy industry on a preferential basis while promoting light industry and agriculture simultaneously was advanced, the value of total industrial output was increased by 3.5 times between 1957 and 1960 and the industrial output increased by an annual average of 15.9 per cent between 1970 and 1979. By the end of the late 1980s, production boomed on an unprecedented scale in all sectors of industry.

Entering the 1990s the country was faced with harsh difficulties in economic construction due to the collapse of the socialist market, the imperialists' vicious schemes against it and a succession of natural disasters. But it raised its position into a state of manufacturing and launching earth satellites by relying on its own self-supporting economic foundations. Moreover, the country remained unperturbed in the 2000s when many countries were floundering as giant banks and conglomerates were going bankrupt due to the global financial crisis.

A few years ago the Workers' Party of Korea set forth a new five-year plan for national economic development at its Eighth Congress. In pursuance of this plan, serious efforts are made to consolidate the economic foundations of key industries including metallurgical and chemical industries and build 50 000 flats in Pyongyang, houses in the countryside and large-scale greenhouse farms for improving the people's standard of living. And this will be inconceivable separated from the powerful foundations of its independent national economy which has been consolidated in the past several decades.



Chollima tractor, the first of its kind made by the Korean working class in 1958



Electric locomotive *Pulguni-1* produced in 1961
(The Korean working class designed and made over 225 000 parts
of 14 000 kinds by their own efforts and technology.)



West Sea Barrage built in 1986 across eight kilometres of wild sea in the short period of five years



12 000-ton cargo vessel *Jangsusan* built in 2021



Local-industry factories in Kimhwa County, Kangwon Province, DPRK, which were renovated in 2022 as model factories for the local industry sector



Modern, large-scale Ryonpho Greenhouse Farm built in 2022 in the northeastern part of the country



Part of Samjiyon in Ryanggang Province, a model of mountain city in the northern alpine region of Korea standing an average of 1 300 m above sea level



Pyongyang metro undergoing facelift, and a new underground train manufactured by the Korean working class in 2022



Part of 10 000 flats in Songhwa Street built only in a year pursuant to the construction plan of 50 000 flats in Pyongyang (2022)



Part of the first-stage 10 000 flats in the Hwasong area inaugurated in 2023, forming another new street in Pyongyang in no more than one year



DPRK's earth observation satellite *Kwangmyongsong 4* soars into the space carried by *Kwangmyongsong* rocket in 2016