

# DPRK's Image in the Era of Kim Jong Un

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Some time ago, I had an opportunity of enjoying the grand mass gymnastics and artistic performance The Glorious Country at the May Day Stadium in Pyongyang.

The performance that artistically depicted the DPRK's 70-year history of nation-building and defence, miracles and leaps forward made me feel an impulse to tell the world about the country in Kim Jong Un's era that I have witnessed as I learned and studied the Juche philosophy for years in Pyongyang.

I am not good at writing, but I took up my pen, conscious that it is my mission as a scholar aspiring after only the truth as well as a member of the nation to convey the present reality of the DPRK which is reflected as a country of independence, unity, prosperity and peace.

## 1

In his book Sacred Guardian of the Independent Country, Mr. O Ik Je expressed his view on the DPRK's reality in Kim Jong Il's era by writing, "I knew that the Republic was a country dignified with independence when I was in south Korea. However, I had never imagined that the northern society had such an inexhaustible spiritual strength based on the Juche character and national character and that the people kept the independent will in their minds as an unshakable faith."

As the world people know, the history of Korea was not smooth. The 500-year history of the feudal Joseon dynasty, the last feudal state of Korea, is recorded as a history of flunkeyism, in which its rulers were afraid of big countries and worshipped them and subjected to coercion and intervention as their predestined fate. National ruin was

the fate of “backward Korea” which failed to protest against foreign invasion and had to tolerate big powers scrambling for colonies in its own territory. With the fabrication of the “Ulsa five-point treaty” in 1905, the national rights of Korea were transferred completely to Japan.

By origin, the Korean nation was not a backward one.

It is a resourceful nation that manufactured metal types and an iron-clad vessel for the first time in the world and created the excellent national alphabet that the world recognizes. However, flunkeyism gradually benumbed the strength and spirit of Korea and, in the early 20th century, it became the most miserable country in the world.

Vicious threat and blackmail, sanctions and pressure that no country or nation has ever experienced in history still persist against the DPRK. The world miscalculated on several occasions that the DPRK would no longer be able to survive the terrifying ordeal.

But the country rose up. It not only survived the hardship but has rushed forward along the road it chose.

Then, what has enabled the DPRK to withstand the threat and pressure imposed by allied hostile forces for over 70 years and to become stronger far from collapsing?

The DPRK people unanimously answer this question of the world that it is independence.

Independence has struck its roots deep in this country.

In Chinese, independence means that “one makes himself a master” and “one has his own view on everything and is responsible for his deeds”.

The DPRK people’s understanding of independence is beyond imagination of the world people in scope and profoundness.

The Western people who have lived in the world of “freedom” for a long time find it difficult to understand the DPRK’s independence. When we ask 10 Western people what their “freedom” is, their answers will be different. There are even people who say they oppose freedom. But, when we ask thousands of the DPRK people what their independence is, their answer is the same and their words and deeds are also the same.

Western “freedom” involves interference in internal affairs of other countries. The DPRK’s independence is fundamentally different from it and thoroughly rejects flunkeyism and interference in internal affairs of other countries. This is important in understanding the DPRK’s independence.

Generally speaking, the history of leadership of President Kim Il Sung is the history of independence: he always held fast to national independence to overcome grave trials and difficulties, resolutely adhered to the stand of the working masses and defended socialism to build a prosperous and dignified country centred on the people.

Independence is an inviolable right and, at the same time, the strength to guarantee it.

In his work *Let Us Live Not Merely for Today but for Tomorrow* made public in January 1996, Chairman Kim Jong Il said that “no one in the world can match a man ready to risk his life” is the faith and pluck to be possessed by our revolutionaries.

His Songun politics not only defended Korean-style socialism but also boosted the ability in the field of the cutting-edge science and technology and generalized the revolutionary soldier spirit in the whole society, thus solidifying the DPRK’s single-minded unity remarkably and putting its spiritual strength on an unprecedentedly high phase.

Nowhere else can be seen such an army as the Korean People's Army that takes upon itself both national defence and construction.

The principle of independence is still carried on in the era of Kim Jong Un.

Chairman Kim Jong Un is a national hero who exalts the honour of the DPRK as a powerful independent country recognized by the world, not as a weak country that reads others' faces or opts for other road for fear of sanctions and pressure.

At the 7th Congress of the Workers' Party of Korea, he pointed to the need to worship the nation alone, believe in its strength alone and discuss the reunification issue with the compatriots alone and to categorically reject all acts of sycophancy and dependence on foreign forces, which gnaw at the consciousness of national independence and undermine the principle of national self-development.

It is, indeed, a meaningful remark pulsating with the independent faith and will.

His faith and will resulted in the strategy, lines and policies startling the world and made the DPRK demonstrate to the world its image as an independent country both in name and reality.

When the Chairman crossed for the first time in the history of national division the demarcation line in Panmunjom where the north and the south level guns at each other, the world saw his determination and gut befitting the leader of an independent country.

He paid his first foreign visit to China, a neighbouring country. He met Chinese President Xi Jinping to cement the traditional China-DPRK friendly ties once again and open a new chapter for the development of bilateral relations. He visited China three times in some months to bring about an eye-opening reality in which the two

countries continue to go along the road of good neighbourliness and friendship. His foreign policy can be said to be part of the independent line and politics.

The historic Singapore DPRK-US summit meeting and talks on June 12 caused a great sensation throughout the world.

Chairman Kim Jong Un's independent way of thinking and practice and his extraordinary political ability based on independence brought about an amazing reality which makes it possible to write a new history of DPRK-US relationship by finding out solutions that serve the interests of the both on an equal footing and in accordance with a new era, a new situation.

Thanks to his leadership that starts from independence and is consistent with independence, the DPRK has risen up imposingly as a section of the world and the world has come to see the DPRK, a small yet great independent power, with a fresh point of view.

This is the image of the DPRK in the era of Kim Jong Un, which is powerful with independence, that I witnessed.

It is customary for the Koreans to ask a stranger what his or her affiliation is. This means that all members of the DPRK society belong to certain organizations.

There might not be such a country in the world as the DPRK where the people of all ages and sexes are affiliated to relevant organizations and lead a life in their organizations on a regular basis. Lots of such organizations form a socio-political organism that can be

found nowhere else and the whole society is united to form a harmonious socialist family.

In this country where the state takes care of all people and lead them, the people accept the idea of “One for all and all for one!” as their vital need and unite as one to become ever more powerful beings as they rely on the collective and feel delight in the collective’s strength.

One August day last year, I happened to hear a Chinese girl student and a 50-year-old chambermaid have a dialogue on the corridor of the foreign students’ hostel at Kim Il Sung University.

The student told the hostel keeper in broken Korean, “Today we visited the Kumsusan Palace of the Sun. We paid homage to President Kim Il Sung and Chairman Kim Jong Il of the National Defence Commission.”

The chambermaid stopped working for a while and looked intimately at the girl. She wiped away the sweat on the girl’s face and patted her on the back as she told her smilingly that one ought to pay homage to the President and the Chairman when one visits the DPRK.

Chambermaid is an ordinary worker that can be found in every country. Such an ordinary worker shows affection for a foreign student who paid homage to her leaders. It was really a touching, beautiful scene. To follow their leader has already become the part and parcel of life of the DPRK people.

Socialist Korea that attaches importance to politics has employed a unique mode of politics. Transcending the consciousness of whether it is the “politics by minority” or the “politics by majority,” the DPRK formulated afresh the concept of democracy as the “politics that integrates the will of the people” instead of the “politics by majority.”

It defined love for and trust in the people as the basic political mode of socialism and applied this to Party and state activities.

Abuse of power and bureaucracy, the leftover of old society, are major targets in the DPRK society. It put an end to them and in the course of translating the love for and trust in the people into reality, it united all people into one organism that shares the same destiny.

According to the DPRK theory of socio-political integrity, organism means the unity of the leader and all the people.

Law is unable to make the leader and the people share the same destiny. For them to do so, they should believe in and rely on each other. The DPRK resolved this matter with the relationship of comradely love and obligation. The leader and the people become one body that never betray each other on the basis of comradely moral relations in which the leader loves the people and the latter support the former's politics with a sense of obligation.

In the relationship between the leader and the people, the former's view of the latter plays a decisive role.

Chairman Kim Jong Un's motto is to prioritize and love the people.

In his New Year Address in 2017, he said that his desires were burning all the time, but he spent the past year feeling anxious and remorseful for the lack of his ability, adding that he was hardening his resolve to seek more tasks for the sake of the people this year and make redoubled, devoted efforts to this end.

As he is so modest about the exploits he performed for the sake of the people, he made such a solemn vow. This vividly shows how he sees the people.



The community where the leader and the people live with one mind under the politics of love is just the socio-political organism in the DPRK.

Not money but man works miracles.

The single-minded unity based on the absolute trust and love between the leader and the people demonstrates its great might also in the field of economic construction.

On display at the Korean Revolution Museum is the material under the title “Proud creations adding brilliance to the great golden age of construction”, which says that over 80 structures were built in the DPRK from 2012 to 2015, including Wisong Scientists Dwelling District, Masikryong Ski Resort, Wonsan Baby Home, Wonsan Orphanage and Paektusan Hero Youth Power Station. The DPRK also erected Sci-Tech Complex, Ryomyong Street and many other buildings in the past two years. It proves that the DPRK has undergone tremendous changes in recent years.

The DPRK has not collapsed under the protracted sanctions of the international community but has risen up higher. It is because desire and idea, idea and politics, politics and reality are integrated with the people as the major premise.

In this respect, it can be said that the single-minded unity of the leader and his people is the productive force peculiar to the DPRK.

The DPRK’s single-minded unity is truthful as its starting point is love for the people, inevitable as the people’s trust in the leader is absolute, and irreversible as its general intention is to build people-centred socialism.

Its people are sure that they can do anything and they have nothing to be afraid of in the world.

It is because they have the treasure, the single-minded unity that they consider as the strength more powerful than A-bomb.

This is the image of the DPRK in Kim Jong Un's era, which is powerful with unity, that I witnessed.

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In June this year, I toured Wonsan for the third time to visit Wonsan University of Agriculture and the Wonsan Leather Shoes Factory. I could see the Kalma peninsula lying in the east of the Wonsan bay.

The overall view of the gigantic construction site of the Wonsan-Kalma Coastal Tourist Area was magnificent. Big and small buildings of various types were rising up one after another along the seashore of Myongsasipri (4 kilometre-long beautiful sandy beach). I felt like I was seeing the image of an ever-prospering DPRK at a single glance.

According to Rodong Sinmun dated May 23, in the period of the spring land management campaign, millions of cubic metres of dredging and over a million square metres of stone covering were carried out in rivers and streams across the country so as to improve them and over 160 hectares of forests were created for protecting banks. In recent years a "war to improve nature" has been staged in the DPRK in order to turn all mountains into gold mountains.

In August this year when he gave field guidance at the construction site of Samjiyon County, Chairman Kim Jong Un said that if Samjiyon is to be built into a county where peculiarities of a mountainous region and the national character are combined, it is necessary to refurbish the county seat first and then set the phased

yearly goals for 3-4 years so as to upgrade all farm villages in the county and turn it into a standard and model unit to be copied by all others in the country.

I am sure that all mountains, fields and seas in all areas of the DPRK, irrespective of flat areas and mountainous regions, will be turned into prospering golden fields, gold mountains and gold seas in the near future. Because it is the plan of Chairman Kim Jong Un and the practice of the people.

Decades ago Joseph Neigh, an invited professor of a country, coined the concept of “intangible ability”. With this as a momentum, the international community began to observe national strength of a country by dividing it into substantial ability and intangible ability. According to this argument, substantial ability includes such material strength as economic, military, scientific and technological capabilities while intangible ability consists of such spiritual power as political, cultural and diplomatic capabilities.

After the Cold War ended, lots of socialist countries were beaten by the intangible power of Western countries. Their collapse is mainly attributable to the fact that politicians turned away from the standpoint of working masses and did not believe in their strength. In other words, they collapsed as there was a big breach in their intangible ability, not in their substantial ability.

The national strength of the DPRK is tremendous. When national strength of a country is manifested externally, it is demonstrated as the overall ability, an organic combination of substantial and intangible abilities. This country’s national strength is characterized by the fact that it has a solid basis of independent national economy, even though its size is small, and great military capability in view of substantial

ability. In view of intangible ability, it has extraordinary political ability of the leader, might of single-minded unity and sound social and cultural influence.

In April this year, the Workers' Party of Korea put forward a new strategic line of concentrating all efforts on economic construction. "Let us make a leap forward by dint of science and guarantee the future by dint of education!" is an inspiring slogan suited to the actual reality of the DPRK and the trend of the times.

The DPRK is not merely creating material wealth but working to renovate and modernize all realms of society by giving precedence to science and education and to place overall national strength on a new phase. The 6th Session of the 12th Supreme People's Assembly held in 2012 adopted the decree "On enforcing the universal 12-year compulsory education" with the unanimous approval of the deputies.

The DPRK is a country where all the people can learn free of charge all their lives. In recent years, it has worked to attain the goal of making all people well-versed in science and technology while focusing on the development of general secondary education.

To make all people well-versed in science and technology means to prepare all members of society as intelligent workers with the intellectual level of a university graduate, and as the developers of science and technology.

The DPRK gives importance to science and education actually, not as a show.

Chairman Kim Jong Un pays close attention to the living of educators and scientists who perform a pivotal role in making all people well-versed in science and technology. When Changjon Street was newly built in the centre of Pyongyang, he first visited a family of

teachers consisting of a couple and their two daughters. He said that teachers who devote their all to training talents of the country are genuine patriots.

In late April this year, I was invited to give a lecture under the title of “Story of independent Korea” at Shandong University in Weihai, China.

I was told that well-known professors in China were to attend the lecture. So I made detailed preparations for the lecture. Showing the audience the pictures of teachers’ families moving to new houses and their inner structure, I explained them: “Ryomyong Street was newly constructed in Pyongyang in April 2017. The street has lots of dwelling houses. Over 1 700 educators and researchers at Kim Il Sung University were provided with houses free of charge thanks to the solicitude of Chairman Kim Jong Un.” Listening to my lecture, all the teachers and students including experienced professors were astir in astonishment and admiration, and then they sent me loud applause. At that moment, I was filled with the pride of being a PhD of the DPRK, an eyewitness of such wonderful reality.

The DPRK is bringing about a fresh innovation also in the field of economic management.

The following points are what draw attention in its establishing a new economic management method.

First, the country is actively diffusing and introducing science and technology and improving economic management so as to make all sectors and units vitally interested in the development and introduction of new technologies.

Second, it is improving economic management so as to increase production to the maximum by enhancing responsibility and role of the working people, the producers and builders.

Third, it is improving economic management in the direction of making all enterprises conduct business on their own initiative and in a creative way.

In the DPRK, the “socialist enterprise responsibility and management system,” a new mode of economic management, is widely being introduced in factories, enterprises and cooperative organizations, and the “field assignment system”, a new mode within the framework of the sub-workteam management system, on cooperative farms.

As precedence is given to science and education and a new mode of economic management is established in this country, many enterprises and farms benefit from that, zeal for collective emulation bubbles up and the people become better off as the days go by.

In late April this year, the Bangou Institute, a well-known research organization in China, published a report on the present situation of the DPRK’s economy. The report also included the data assessing the mineral resources of the DPRK.

“Over 300 kinds of minerals have already been discovered and more than 200 kinds of them are of economic development value.”

The DPRK’s national anthem Patriotic Song includes the passages “Shine bright, you dawn, on this land so fair” and “So rich in silver and in gold you are”. As the words of the song tell, the DPRK is a beautiful country with abundant natural resources.

I am sure that the DPRK people will perform world-startling miracles by dint of their own resources and technology and in their own way, under the wise leadership of Chairman Kim Jong Un.

This is the image of the prospering DPRK in Kim Jong Un's era that I witnessed.

4

It is a pressing issue in ensuring global peace and security and achieving prosperity and development in Northeast Asia to prevent war and safeguard peace on the Korean peninsula, the world's hottest spot where the danger of nuclear war is present constantly.

By the end of 2017, the DPRK-US relationship was the hostile one that was devoid of minimum mutual trust as they might fight at any time. The world was uneasy with the worry that not only the Korean peninsula but the whole earth would be unable to avoid nuclear catastrophe if the US and the DPRK should continue to confront each other. China and other neighbouring countries worried more about it. The military showdown between the DPRK and the US was not an issue confined to a region or the two countries but an urgent matter directly related to the global peace and security.

Entering 2018, the situation on the Korean peninsula took a radical turn. A live broadcast of Chairman Kim Jong Un's New Year Address marked the beginning of a turnaround in the international situation. He made a courageous and independent decision for peace and security of his fellow countrymen and the world people.

His tour for peace led to a landmark event that brought about a radical turn in relations between the DPRK and the US, the most hostile foes. The world's leading media vied with each other to broadcast this event first.

Chinese foreign minister Wang Yi said, “The DPRK and the US have been hostile to each other for over half a century. That the top leaders of the two countries sit together and hold dialogue on an equal footing is of great and positive significance and this implies that a new history is in the making. China welcomes and supports it.”

The rapidly developing atmosphere of peace and reconciliation on the Korean peninsula is capturing the hearts of all the fellow Koreans and working miracles entrancing people so much that they sometimes can hardly believe them.

Today the world actually realizes that the slogan “Korea does what it is determined to do!” is not empty talk and experts on the Korean issue are “complaining” that they are unable to follow Mallima as it gallops too fast.

Peace is not granted by heaven or by chance. Numerous heroic myths and the leader’s distinguished political ability and foresightedness are necessary to make peace settle in one country and maintain it. In the tete-a-tete talks with President Trump, Chairman Kim Jong Un made the meaningful remarks that it was really not that easy to get to where we are, and that we were once hostage to the past and had our eyes and ears covered by ingrained prejudice and practices, but we are now here at the new starting point.

Prejudice against the DPRK and distorted relations between the two countries are being put to right one by one and the situation on the Korean peninsula is gradually switching from bitter confrontation of strength to reconciliation and peace. This is ascribed to the resolute determination of Chairman Kim Jong Un who devotes his all to rooting out the source of war danger on the Korean peninsula,



cherishing the noble sense of responsibility for the destiny of the nation and the peace of the world.

Inter-Korean confrontation and hatred that persisted for over 70 years are also being replaced by relations of peace and trust.

Visits of high-level delegations between the north and the south got frequent after the Chairman delivered the New Year Address, and they led to the inter-Korean summit meeting. Chairman Kim Jong Un and President Moon Jae In met at the demarcation line in Panmunjom, shaking hands and exchanging greetings. It was a historic meeting that opened up a new era of national reconciliation and unity, peace and prosperity.

Thereafter, the inter-Korean ties have rapidly been boosted towards peace, reconciliation and cooperation. The north-south summit meeting was held for the third time and the September Pyongyang Joint Declaration was adopted in less than five months. On September 20 when the leaders of the north and the south climbed up Mt Paektu and firmly grasped their hands and held them high towards all the fellow countrymen, the world clearly saw that a new history of peace and prosperity on the Korean peninsula has been put on track.

The atmosphere of peace and reconciliation created finally on the Korean peninsula is very valuable and precious. It is associated with the lifelong efforts of the DPRK's preceding leaders, the blood and sweat of the brave and resourceful Korean people and the philosophy of love and trust of Chairman Kim Jong Un.

The road to peace and reunification is not a royal road. These are the desire common to tens of millions of the fellow countrymen, but they have not come true yet.

Hard work is never wasted.

I sincerely hope that the three rounds of historic meetings between Chairman Kim Jong Un and President Moon Jae In will bring peace and prosperity to this beautiful land of Korea and open the gates to reunification.

This is the image of the DPRK in the era of Kim Jong Un, which ushers in a new era of peace, that I witnessed.

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I have Korean Central Yearbook for 2011 to 2017 in my library. Statistical data on the revolutionary activities of Chairman Kim Jong Un which were made public to the world, such as the number of works he wrote, that of field inspection tours he made, that of sports games and performances he saw and that of events he attended on the occasion of major anniversaries, tell that he has worked devotedly day and night in those years and that the DPRK people have a great leader.

The DPRK is now in the limelight of the world community as a country of independence, unity, prosperity and peace thanks to the great idea, extraordinary leadership ability, untiring energy and devotion of the Chairman.

He is, both in name and reality, the symbol of mightiness of the DPRK, the banner of invincibility and a great man of the world possessed of an extraordinary leadership ability.

Availing myself of this opportunity, I extend the greatest glory to Chairman Kim Jong Un who leads the DPRK to a powerful socialist country.

As a citizen of the People's Republic of China, I sincerely wish the traditional Sino-DPRK friendship eternity through generations.

Infinite glory to the invincible Democratic People's Republic of Korea!

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