

***LOOK AFTER THE PEOPLE IN A RESPONSIBLE MANNER AS A MOTHER
WOULD DO WITH HER CHILDREN***

A Talk to the Officials of the Organizational Leadership Department
of the Central Committee of the Workers' Party of Korea and
Pyongyang City
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It is very important in the work of Party organizations and Party officials to pay constant, close attention to the people's living conditions.

During my recent inspection of Pyongyang City and many places in the provinces, I have found many problems that need to be solved to improve the people's living conditions. There are many shortages of commodity supply, shortcomings in city management and in providing communal amenities. Consequently, people are feeling considerable discomfort.

Of course, it is true that the standard of living of our people is now incomparably higher than it was in wartime or in the years of postwar reconstruction. The people in both the urban and rural communities are living under good stable conditions, without big worries about food, clothing and housing. However, we must not rest on our laurels and say that the problems relating to the people's living conditions have all been resolved satisfactorily. Our people's standard of living is not yet high enough. Since cereals are supplied by the state, virtually free of charge, the people can eat their fill, but they cannot yet afford to eat meat, eggs and similar things regularly and many items of consumer goods are in short supply.

The leader said that one of the age-long desires of our people has been to live in tile-roofed houses, eating rice and meat soup and dressed in silk clothes. He stated that we must guarantee to the people that this desire will come true without fail in the near future. Officials must pay deep attention to the people's living conditions and change into dignified reality our leader's noble idea of providing the people with a decent life so that they will not envy other people. If they show deep concern for our people's life and make strenuous efforts to better it, officials can ensure that the people will live a richer life than now, even under the present conditions.

The economic situation now in our country is not what it was in the days immediately following the armistice. We have accomplished the goals of the Three-Year Plan for Postwar Rehabilitation and Development of the National Economy⁴ and the Five-Year Plan of the National Economy⁵ ahead of schedule, and are now implementing

the tasks of the latter half of the Seven-Year Plan⁶. We have built strong bases for heavy industry and modern light industry and strengthened the material and technical foundations of agriculture and this was done starting from practically nothing in a short period of time. The economic foundations that have been constructed by our people through their self-sacrifices are very strong. However, the standard of living of our people is low in comparison with the economic foundations because our officials are not attentive enough to their living conditions and inefficient in their work. The main barrier to solving this problem of improving their standard of living is not material conditions but the officials' ideological viewpoint and their work attitude.

In order to solve the problem of people's living, first of all, the officials should have a correct understanding of this problem. Our officials are now in the habit of saying that the question of people's living is important, but they have not a clear understanding of how important it is, in our Party's activities and in the building of socialism, to improve the standard of living of the people. Under our system no treasure is more precious than the people. The aim of building socialism and communism is, in the final analysis, to provide the working masses, the masters of society, with a rich and civilized life. Raising their standard of living is by no means an economic or business deal. It is only when we raise their standard of living constantly and provide everyone with an equitable, happy life that we can convince the working people of the advantages of socialism over capitalism and encourage them to work hard to strengthen and develop the socialist system. Without improving the standard of living of the people, it is impossible to accomplish the historic task of national reunification and enhance the prestige of our country in foreign relations.

Since the question of the people's living standard occupies such an important place in our revolution and construction, the leader has put forward the policy of steadily improving their living standard, regarding it as the highest principle of our Party's activities, and therefore he has always paid close attention to their livelihood. Even under the difficult conditions in the years of postwar reconstruction when not even an undamaged brick was available and even a gram of cement was precious, he adopted all the measures to stabilize and improve the people's living standard and guided the construction of each of the heavy industry factories so that it would be conducive to the people's livelihood. During the war our people lost all their homes and household goods and also they had no tableware worth mentioning when they started rebuilding their lives from scratch. However, under the leader's wise leadership and his people-orientated policy, they have now built in the main the foundations for a new type of life in the short period of only ten years and are consequently leading a stable life.

The Fourth Congress of our Party defined the basic tasks of the Seven-Year Plan as markedly improving the people's standard of living, and set the targets of producing six million tons of cereals, 400 to 500 million metres of fabrics, one to 1.2 million tons of seafood and 500,000 tons of fruit in the last year of the Seven-Year Plan. At the same time there must be built 600,000 flats in the urban communities and workers' districts and houses for 600,000 families in the rural communities during the Seven-Year Plan. When these targets are attained, a new advance will have been made in the material and cultural standards of the people.

The leader has stated that the officials' loyalty to the Party, to the working class and to the people is verified by the people's living standard. Indifference to the people's living standard and slighting it is a concentrated expression of a lack of loyalty to the people. Indifference to the people's living standard is indifference to the people themselves, and in our society nothing is worse than this indifference. Party organizations must strongly combat the officials' lack of loyalty to the people and their indifference to the people's standard of living.

Party officials must become truly people's servants who show motherly concern for their living and work devotedly in order to improve their lives.

The people have entrusted our Party with everything and they call our Party a motherly Party. The term motherly Party implies their deep trust in our Party as well as their enormous expectations from it to look after their future destiny.

In order to fulfil their responsibility and role as the workers of a motherly Party and to prove themselves worthy of the people's trust and expectations. Party officials must have genuine traits of a real mother.

A real mother wishes to give her children all the best things in the world and so she faces whatever dangers or difficulties there are unhesitatingly for the good of her children. That is what a mother's heart is like. Her benevolence towards her children is pure, profound and genuine. That is why children call for their mothers when they are happy, when they are sad, and even when they are grown up. Mothers lavish all their efforts on raising their children normally. It takes a mother 50,000 days' labour to rear a child, so she used to be called omani (50,000) which came to be pronounced omoni (mother) gradually. In some parts of our country a mother is still called omani. I cannot confirm its etymology, but I think that the word implies the warm love and enormous efforts a mother devotes to her children. Mothers go to a great deal of trouble for the good of their children, but they consider it their pleasure and something worthwhile. If officials think of the people before anything else with the heart and

trait of a mother and work hard for their welfare, they will find no problem impossible to solve in their lives.

More often than not officials do not care enough about the people's discomfort and sufferings because they lack loyalty to the people and have no warm love for them.

Take for example transportation in Pyongyang. In rush hours there are long queues at the bus stops and among them are many women with their children. But senior officials do not feel remorse at the sight of so many people trembling in the winter's cold, waiting for buses. They seem to ignore the problem as if they had nothing to do with the situation of people's discomfort. Transportation in Pyongyang City is not a problem that can never be solved. In Pyongyang there is a trolley-bus factory and many machine factories which can make machine parts for buses. If they give all their attention to the matter and adopt the proper measures to increase the number of buses as well as the rate of their operation and improve the organization of their service on a rational basis, then the senior officials concerned will be perfectly able to relieve the strain on transportation.

A host of instances of officials' irresponsible work attitudes that cause discomfort to the people can be cited. Due to the careless organization of transportation in some districts of Pyongyang, a short time ago, the inhabitants of these districts did not receive regular coal supplies, although there were large piles of coal at the Samsin Coal Mine. If officials had regarded the matters relating to the people's living conditions as their own household affairs and paid attention to them, the people would not have felt any discomfort from the shortage of coal supplies in the winter. At the present time shops are not provided with sufficient supplies of soap, toothpaste, cider, biscuits and similar goods so that our people are feeling inconveniences and find life drab. The failure to produce and supply these goods in sufficient quantities is not due to a shortage of raw materials or a lack of technical conditions but to the lack of officials' concern for the people's everyday life.

The leader has instructed that even when they themselves have eaten their fill senior officials must be concerned about whether or not the people are hungry, and that even when they are living in well-heated rooms, they must worry about whether or not the people are feeling cold. Only those who think of the people in preference to themselves and regard the people's suffering as their own can be officials, communists, who are truly loyal to the people.

Enhancing the administrative, economic officials' sense of responsibility is important in solving the problems of improving the people's living conditions. In a capitalist society individual people are responsible for their own livelihood, but in a socialist society, in

which production, distribution and consumption are planned and conducted under the unified leadership of the state, the state must assume full responsibility when looking after the people. That is why the leader has said that our people's government is the people's servant and the administrator of national life. It is only when the administrative, economic officials who are in direct charge of the economic situation of the country discharge their duties well, with a high sense of responsibility and a spirit of devoted service to the people, that they are able to find satisfactory solutions to the problems of providing food, clothing and housing.

Officials must go frequently among the people, learn about their needs and difficulties in time and solve them satisfactorily. At present, officials are performing their duties routinely, cooped up in their offices, instead of mixing with the people. So they are not familiar with the people's needs and are not clear about what problem is developing in life.

During the good vegetable season last summer, I received complaints that some vegetable shops in the Phyongchon and Songyo Districts had often run out of supplies. I learned that in these shops which were near factories, the vegetables were bought by working women when they went home from work. The officials in charge of distribution, not knowing this situation, allotted vegetables to shops indiscriminately, from their desks, so there was a surplus of vegetables at some shops while there was a shortage at other shops, giving discomfort to the people.

Vegetables are an important item of our people's diet which cannot be dispensed with even for a single day. Even though we might be unable to supply the people with enough meat and eggs for every meal, we must ensure that at least a variety of vegetables are supplied regularly, without running out of supply. However, vegetables are not being supplied to meet the varied needs and likings of our people. While inspecting shops, I have found that only ordinary vegetables such as cabbages were on sale, but not lettuce, costmary, green peppers, green garlic and so on, even in the summer season, to say nothing of winter. Ever since olden times, Koreans are fond of eating rice wrapped in lettuce leaves and green garlic dipped in chilli beanmash, but, because lettuce, costmary, green garlic and similar choice vegetables are not available at vegetable shops, urban people can hardly taste rice wrapped in lettuce leaves at any time of year. This occurs because the officials concerned do not pay attention to the production of such vegetables, they have an erroneous view that such vegetables are low-yielding and that such things can be dispensed with. These vegetables are not eaten at every meal, and their cultivation does not require a large area of land. Therefore, if they organize work properly, they will be perfectly able to find a solution to this problem.

Feeling sorry to see that children in Pyongyang would hardly have a chance to eat green maize in season, the leader gave instructions that some maize should be harvested while still green and given to them even though the quotas of cereal production would have to be adjusted. It is the common feeling of all our parents that they wish to feed green maize to their children in season. Of course, nobody complains that green maize, early-ripening potatoes or choice vegetables are not available because our people place the national economic life above their individual desires and are generous enough to endure their discomfort. Our officials therefore must understand people's thoughts and try to meet their desires promptly. Working like this should be the duty and attitude of all our officials who have the responsibility to look after the people.

Officials must not only mix with the masses and understand their desires, but also try to fulfil all their desires in a responsible manner. Hearing opinions from people is useless unless the officials help them to find prompt solutions to their problems. In order to meet the daily rising material and cultural needs of our people, officials must use their heads and work in a revolutionary manner.

Yesterday, in company with the leader I inspected the Central Department Store No. 1 and the Taedongmun Grocery and found that the shops were clean and the goods were well arranged, but there was not a big variety and their quality was low. If we are to improve the standard of living of the people, we must struggle to increase the production of goods and improve their quality. We must supply sufficient raw materials and other necessities to light-industry factories so that they can increase production and improve the quality of their products. There is a need to make stronger demands on them regarding production. In addition, we must adopt measures to expand the factories which need expansion and to build new ones if necessary, in order to meet the ever-increasing demand of the people. Merely complaining that one thing is lacking and that another thing has got stuck, instead of working actively, will get you nowhere.

Public services should be arranged rationally so as to be convenient for all working people. At the present time, shops and communal amenities are located mostly in the centre of the city. This is not in agreement with the basic mission and principle of socialist commerce. It does not matter very much that shops selling manufactured goods are located mainly on the central streets of the city, but groceries, especially vegetable shops, must be located at different places in the residential areas for the convenience of the working people. You must not confine yourselves to arranging shops neatly, but run them properly so that they really benefit the people. Party organizations must ensure that officials refrain from practising formalism and expediency in the work of improving the people's standard of living or from covering up something bad.

In order to improve the people's standard of living, we must launch a widespread mass campaign and mobilize the efforts and wisdom of the masses in every possible way.

The demands of the people's livelihood have great variety, and there is no section which is not connected with their lives in our society. The lone efforts of the workers in the fields of light industry and public services are not enough to solve all the problems of food, clothing and housing for the people. The work of improving the standard of living of the people is a job for the masses as well as an undertaking by the working people themselves. It is only when the broad masses come to work with the awareness of their being masters that all the untapped resources and potentials are mobilized to resolve the problems arising in the people's material and cultural lives without major state investments.

For example, a large number of apartment blocks have been constructed, but their immediate surroundings have not been tidied up. There are kimchi cellars and coal bins here and there in the back yards, and in the rainy weather the roads become muddy so that pedestrians find it difficult to walk. If the people launch a mass movement to tidy up their houses and neighbourhoods (a basic organization of the state and social life in Korea composed of a certain number of household units^{Tr.}), their own streets and villages, build kimchi cellars, coal bins and the like, neatly for each housing area, and pave the lanes with concrete blocks or gravel, then the surroundings will look spick and span and be convenient for their daily life.

When inspecting the city one early morning, I met a woman who was peddling hot soup on a handcart. She said that she had boiled soup every morning and evening and peddled it near apartment houses and that many working women had bought it. If rice cooking houses, laundries, clothes repairing shops and other service facilities are built on a small scale through a mass movement, and home workteams are organized to cook non-staple food for sale, and repair clothes and household utensils, it will be possible to expand the public service networks quickly, and provide the working people with better conveniences, without big state investments.

The Party must improve its guidance in order to ensure that the leader's instructions on raising the people's standard of living are implemented thoroughly.

The Pyongyang City Party organizations are not working as they should be doing. With a view to developing Pyongyang to be worthy of the capital of the revolution and improving the citizens' living, the leader has been teaching officials the direction of work almost every day and providing them with the necessary material conditions. However, none of the problems relating to the people's

living conditions in Pyongyang have been solved in a satisfactory manner. The leader saw to it that many pig farms, chicken farms and duck farms were constructed, and orchards and fish farms were created, in the areas surrounding Pyongyang for the benefit of city dwellers. However, the city authorities concerned are not managing these farms and orchards properly, so that not much meat, eggs and fruit are on sale in the shops. The Pyongyang City Party organizations and senior officials are doing almost nothing to prove themselves worthy of the leader's consideration.

Work in Pyongyang City is not successful mainly because the officials, not being firm in their determination to implement the leader's instructions unflinchingly, do not press ahead with the implementation of his instructions. Many of them are not tenacious in their efforts to implement his instructions; they talk noisily about implementing his instructions at the start, but soon cease to work. They must stop working like this. Party organizations must intensify education so that all the officials acquire the revolutionary attitude of carrying out the leader's instructions without fail. The Party organizations of Pyongyang City must regularly review the implementation of the leader's instructions. They must review which of the leader's instructions given to Pyongyang City, including those given at the meeting of the standing committee of the Pyongyang City Party Committee and at its plenary meeting last year, has been implemented and which of them has not been carried out, and why it has not been done and then they must adopt measures to carry out these instructions. In this way Pyongyang City will be developed, as befitting a revolutionary capital, and the leader's immense consideration for the people of Pyongyang will be more effective.

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