

## GREAT WISDOM

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In October 1975 I visited the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the heroic country and the country of Chollima (winged horse that was said in legend to cover a thousand *ri* in a day), together with my husband Wilfred Burchett, Australian writer-journalist.

In Korea October belongs to autumn when the fruits and grains are fully ripe.

In October 1975 the Korean people celebrated the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the foundation of the Workers' Party of Korea.

President Kim Il Sung invited us to attend the celebrations. We were filled with joy.

We came to know later that President Kim Il Sung saw, on several occasions, the list of the participants in the celebrations, made by the officials concerned, and gave his opinions about it.

We landed at Pyongyang, capital of the DPRK.

It was not my first visit to the DPRK.

I am a Bulgarian woman, and graduated from the universities in Sofia and Italy.

From 1947 I started working in the Bulgarian Telegraph Agency.

I was married to Wilfred Burchett that year.

In June 1950 the US launched its war of aggression against the DPRK, which was still in its infancy, and even mobilized the armies of its 15 satellite states.

At that time I was enraged.

The Korean people, led by the brilliant commander President Kim Il Sung, defeated the US imperialists.

I had a desire to visit the DPRK.

In July and October 1952 I visited Korea as a correspondent and, after the war, stayed for four months in Pyongyang, working as a journalist.

I was filled with emotion, because I had an opportunity to visit the DPRK again after about twenty years.

Pyongyang had a new appearance.

New streets were built in it, which had been turned into debris.

We arrived in Pyongyang, four days before the start of the celebrations.

On October 9, we were invited to attend a public meeting held in honor of the 30<sup>th</sup> birthday of the WPK.

When President Kim Il Sung was coming onto the platform, all the participants in the meeting welcomed him with enthusiastic applause.

The enthusiastic welcome was an expression of the admiration for the great President Kim Il Sung, felt not only by

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the Korean people but also by the progressive people of the world.

Such enthusiasm was again manifested in the celebrations held on the 10<sup>th</sup> of October, when President Kim Il Sung received warm greetings from delegates and other persons from many countries.

After the celebrations we spent pleasant days, visiting many places and seeing art performances.

During our stay we had a desire to have the honor of meeting President Kim Il Sung. We sincerely wished to receive his valuable teachings.

Each night my husband and I talked about the greatness and noble qualities of President Kim Il Sung, yearning for him.

And to our great happiness, we had the honor of meeting him.

On October 21, President Kim Il Sung called us to a place in a suburb of Pyongyang.

Together with my husband, I went there to meet him.

President Kim Il Sung was waiting for us in the entrance to a building.

We greeted him respectfully.

He shook our hands warmly, and asked us about our health.

He posed for a photograph with us and took us to a room.

He said:

“I am very glad that you have accepted my invitation to visit our country and attend the celebrations for the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the foundation of our Party.”

He asked us whether we had any inconvenience during our stay.

My husband answered that, thanks to his deep attention to us, we spent joyful days, and said, "When I visited your country in 1969, you requested me to come again together with my wife.

Since then I have visited your country on several occasions, but without my wife. This time I have come together with my wife."

Looking at me, President Kim Il Sung said he was very pleased that I also came.

He said to my husband, "You have devoted nearly half your life to our Korea. For over 20 years you have done a great deal and rendered great service to our country."

His appreciation exceeded what my husband had done.

To tell the truth, what my husband had done were the things which any conscientious intellectual could have done.

My husband was born in the State of Victoria in Australia.

He left the secondary school halfway because of his poor family conditions, and studied by himself while working. He went to Europe, when he was 25 years old, and conducted his activities as a journalist.

During the Second World War he served as a war correspondent in the Pacific region and also in Germany.

Immediately after the war, he exposed, for the first time, the atomic bombing on Hiroshima of Japan, carried out by the USA.

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During the Korean war, he covered the armistice talks and, in the course of this, exposed the aggressive acts of the USA, and encouraged the Korean people in their just struggle.

Since then he could not return home and lived in exile for 22 years.

While in exile, my husband wrote a lot of books such as *Hiroshima, Panmunjom, Hanoi and Again in Korea*.

President Kim Il Sung knew well that my husband, throughout his long life in exile, had struggled for justice and peace.

He said to my husband:

“You are a good friend of ours. I deem it an honor to have such a good friend as you.”

He also said he had received the two letters which my husband had sent to him, adding that he had them read aloud at a meeting of the Political Committee of the Central Committee of the WPK. He said that those who had participated in the meeting were moved by my husband’s activities.

Expressing his gratitude to my husband for the letters, he said that my husband had done a lot of work for the DPRK during more than 20 years, and made great achievements.

My husband was greatly moved by his appreciation and thanked him again and again.

After a while President Kim Il Sung informed us of the DPRK’s economic developments.

He said:

“We carried out the Six-Year Plan one year and four months ahead of schedule.”

At that moment, my husband hurriedly took out his notebook and said, "Your Excellency President, if you allow me, I would like to write down what you are telling me. I am a journalist who should work for 24 hours a day."

We began to write what he was telling us.

He informed us that, by the end of August that year, the major goals of the Six-Year Plan had been reached and the plan fulfilled in terms of gross industrial output value.

He said that, however, two of the major goals had yet to be reached. One was steel production, the other was cement. He said that those two targets had failed to be reached because of the time lost in importing large sophisticated plants from other countries, and added that those two targets would be reached in the first half of the following year.

He also informed us that, during the Six-Year Plan, considerable effort had been channeled into developing light industry.

He added that, during the preceding Seven-Year Plan, his country had been unable to invest heavily in light industry because of its defense development commitments as necessitated by the international tension triggered off by the Caribbean crisis and other events.

He continued that, consequently, his country had increased investment in light industry during the current Six-Year Plan.

Listening to him, we greatly admired him for his great wisdom.

To tell the truth, if the DPR Korea had paid little attention to its national defense, it would not have been able to

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deal with such incidents as the “Pueblo” incident and the incident in which the “EC-121” spy plane, which had been engaged in espionage against the DPRK, was shot down.

The USA surrendered to the DPR Korea, a small country, which had built a strong national defense.

President Kim Il Sung said that many countries in the world were experiencing a shortage of food, fuel and raw materials, and added that his country had no such difficulties. He said that his country had become self-sufficient in food a long time ago.

He paid a deep attention to the changes in world climate and their effects on agriculture.

In those days the area of the Arctic icecap had increased 12 per cent, thus forming a cold front. That cold front was causing radical changes in weather throughout the world.

The temperature in the northern European countries in the summer of the preceding year, it was said, had risen as high as 56 to 60 degrees, whereas in Moscow it had dropped to 3 degrees, sometimes even to zero, and snow fell in August. The Danube, which had not flooded for centuries, overflowed its banks in the summer of the preceding year, causing damage in many European countries.

He said:

“However, we anticipated the possible effects of the cold front and made provision to deal with them from 1973. This has prevented damage.”

He said it was true that his people did not live in luxury like Europeans, because his country had not yet been reunified.

He added that, however, no one walked around in rags and barefoot nor did anyone sleep under a tree in his country.

He also expressed his views on the international situation.

He touched on the impact of the defeat of the USA in Indochina on the Korean situation.

He spoke about the moves of the US with regard to the Korean question in the United Nations.

He also referred to the prospects for Korea's reunification and to the non-aligned movement.

He talked with us for about one hour and 40 minutes, and took us to a dinner-room.

He said that he would not make a formal speech, because my husband was his old friend, and proposed our good health.

It was really a happy moment.

Looking at us, he said that my husband had done much work for the DPRK, and added that he could not meet my husband during the Korean war, because he had been so busy. He called my husband his comrade-in-arms.

My husband and I were greatly moved by his kind words.

My husband thanked him, saying he had only carried out his international duty.

He said that President Kim Il Sung had led the Korean people to victory in their struggle against US imperialism, and made a great contribution to the cause of the peoples of the third-world countries.

My husband said what he had done was almost negligible, compared to the contributions made by President Kim Il Sung.

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The President helped each of us to delicious Korean dishes.

He told us about the construction of the Youth Chemical Plant, which we had visited.

He said that the plant began to be built not long ago.

He told us that the builders of the plant were doing their best to complete the construction as soon as possible, after they had been informed that he would not visit the plant again until it would be constructed and produce chemical fertilizers.

President Kim Il Sung believed in the strength of the people and encouraged them to the struggle to turn the DPR Korea into a socialist industrial state in a short period of time.

He said that the establishment of an efficient irrigation system played an important role in the development of agriculture.

President Kim Il Sung said that the problem of Korea's reunification should be solved in a peaceful way, by the Korean people themselves.

The President said that it would be necessary to make the world public support the Korean people's struggle for reunification.

He hoped that my husband would pay attention to such matters.

He requested us to visit the DPRK again, together with our children, and take a rest.

Before saying farewell to us, he gave us gifts: cloth for men's suite and Insam liquor to my husband, and a gold watch, with the inscription of his name, and a coverlet to me.

Expressing my deep thanks to him, I told him that I would keep the watch as a most valuable thing.

Almost 30 years have passed since then.

However, I still remember the bright smile on his face.

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