A Talk to the Officials of the Propaganda and Agitation Department of the Central Committee of the Workers. Party of Korea September 16, 1964

A few days ago I inspected the Taesongsan Pleasure Park and found that the construction of the park and the work on the excavation of historical relics along with their rehabilitation, were not progressing smoothly. Many years have passed since the construction of the recreation centre started, but nothing particular has been done except that the ring-road, the zoological and botanical gardens have been constructed. The work of rehabilitating historical sites and relics is being done very slowly.

The great leader, having conceived of the idea of developing beautiful and long celebrated Mt. Taesong into a cultural recreation centre for the people, place for the education of the working people, students and schoolchildren in our Party s revolutionary traditions and in the spirit of patriotism, proposed the construction of the Taesongsan Pleasure Park. He paid many visits to the park construction site where the students of Kim Il Sung University were working, and even directed them in the field.

With great interest in the historical sites and relics of the period of Koguryo (277 B.C.-668 A.D.) on Mt. Taesong in particular, the leader instructed that the construction of the Taesongsan Pleasure Park should be undertaken simultaneously with the work of excavating and rehabilitating sites of historical interest. He summoned historians and directed them in the process for the planned investigation, excavation and rehabilitation of historical sites and relics. He also formed an excavating party and found solutions to various problems arising in excavating and rehabilitating historical sites and relics. But on my visit to Mt. Taesong, I found only a part of the demolished wall having been rebuilt and a few ponds rehabilitated on their old sites.

Tardy progress in the construction of the park and in the rehabilitation of historical sites and relics is due to the fact that the officials of the relevant department of the Party Central Committee have been negligent in guiding this work.

None of the senior officials of the Party Central Committee have ever been to Mt. Taesong to see how the construction of the park is progressing and to plan accordingly. It is seriously improper that, even after the leader has given on-the-spot guidance on many occasions with great interest in the construction of the Taesongsan Pleasure Park, these senior officials have neither visited the construction site nor done organizational and political work for the implementation of the leader instructions.

It is the Propaganda and Agitation Department which should have given Party guidance in the construction of the park with even greater enthusiasm in it than anyone else. But the officials of this department have not visited the park construction site which is only a short distance away. They do not even have a correct idea of what kinds of historical sites and relics exist on Mt. Taesong. This clearly proves you are indifferent to the construction of the park.

Officials are indifferent to the work of excavating and rehabilitating historical sites and relics on Mt. Taesong because they have not acquired a proper attitude towards the cultural heritage of our nation. Some officials nowadays consider that the valuable historical relics created by our ancestors have no value or significance in the present age of revolution or are even detrimental to the revolutionary education of the working people. Because of such an incorrect attitude, guite a few officials are not attentive to the implementation of the Party 's policy on the excavation and preservation of historical sites and relics, and take no measures to preserve our valuable cultural heritage although they see that they are being damaged. During my recent visit to North and South Hwanghae Provinces, I inspected the sites of historical interest in Haeju City and on Mt. Jongbang, and I found their management in a deplorable state. Because of the neglect on upkeep of temples and pavilions, the paintings were discoloured, their roofs leaked, and the areas surrounding them were overgrown with weeds, so that it was impossible to imagine how they once originally appeared. At one time there were a great number of historical sites and relics in our country, which has a history of five thousand years. But many of our cultural heirlooms were destroyed or robbed by invaders, and during the Fatherland Liberation War they were destroyed or burnt down by the indiscriminate bombings of the US imperialists. Consequently, not many of the time-honoured relics are preserved in their original state. It is a great pity that even the few remaining relics of great value are being damaged because of the neglect of upkeep. We must not allow this state of affairs to continue any longer. In order to implement thoroughly our Party spolicy on preserving cultural artifacts and improve the upkeep of historical sites and relics, Party officials must take the lead in acquiring a correct understanding of the cultural artifacts of our nation and a proper attitude towards

The resourcefulness and history of a nation is handed down to posterity through its cultural artifacts. Historical sites and relics are objective reminders of what kind of culture our ancestors created, how they lived and how they developed. In particular, prehistoric ways of life can be studied scientifically by means of archaeological sites and remains. Without historical, cultural artifacts, it would be impossible for our people to acquire a clear knowledge of their history and cultural traditions. A man who is ignorant of the history and culture of his nation can have no pride in his nation nor can he become a true patriot.

The importance of vestiges and relics in ascertaining the history of

development of a country and nation is illustrated by the paleolithic cultural relics which have been excavated in Unggi County, North Hamgyong Province. Before these relics were discovered, it had been considered that there was no paleolithic age in our country. Formerly, Japanese imperialist scholars on their government pay-roll and syco?phantic reactionary historians said that the history of our nation had started with the immigration to our country of primitive people from the north in the neolithic age. Their contention was totally refuted by the remains of primitive people. In Shouses and their tools that were excavated last year in Kulpho-ri, Unggi County, North Hamgyong Province, and by the archaeological verification of these vestiges as being the remains of the paleolithic age.

There are still many questions regarding the history of our coun?try, questions that need scientific solutions. For example, when the people in our country started creating their own culture must be com?pletely clarified. Indepth study of such a question can only be achieved with archaeological excavation. Senior officials must dis?card the attitude of disrespect for historical sites and relics and pay close attention to their excavation and preservation.

The historical sites on Mt. Taesong and in the area surrounding Pyongyang must be excavated on an extensive scale. Since Pyongyang was the capital of Koguryo, there are many his?torical sites and relics of the period of Koguryo in Pyongyang and its surrounding area. On Mt. Taesong, for instance, there is the oldest and largest fort in our country and, at its foot, there are the sites of the Anhak Palace of the Koguryo dynasty and many ancient tombs. Ancient tombs are at Ryokpho and Rangrang. The investigation, excavation and study of these sites and relics, however, are not being undertaken satisfactorily.

It is true that over recent years the lecturers and students of the history department of Kim Il Sung University have, in accordance with the leader. s instructions, investigated and excavated some of the historical sites and relics on Mt. Taesong. They have excavated the site of a gate and the sites of barracks, army provision stores and well, as well as having surveyed the site of the Anhak Palace to a considerable degree. But this is only a beginning of what needs to be done.

The Propaganda and Agitation Department and the Science and Education Department of the Party Central Committee must learn about all the research and excavation work done at the historical sites and relics on Mt. Taesong and in the area surrounding Pyongyang in order to take appropriate measures.

We must speed up the work of restoring to the original state some of the artifacts and relics of the Koguryo period on Mt. Taesong. The leader has instructed that the historical sites on Mt. Taesong should be investigated and excavated so that some representative ones can be rehabilitated so as to be shown to the people as visual aids. The rehabilitation of historical sites and relics is, in no way, intended to bring about a return to the past. True, the artifacts of ancient culture are redolent of religion in many respects. But these cultural

relics, without exception, have been created by our people. s efforts and wisdom; they reflect the resourcefulness and talents of our ancestors. Some of the historical sites and relics, when rehabilitated, can present vivid pictures of the architectural techniques of ancient Korea and other excellent cultural radiations of our nation to the working people and the younger people who visit the recreation cen?tre.

Everyone now says that our nation is resourceful and courageous with a history of five thousand years and a brilliant culture, but not many people have a good knowledge of the history and culture of Koguryo which was renowned as a powerful country. Koguryo was a mighty country with a large territory and a highly developed culture. Its people were very courageous and passionately patriotic. Its great strength and its high cultural standard are of great pride to our nation. For example, the fort on Mt. Taesong which was built in the Koguryo period is built on a large scale, and the technique of its construction is very refined. The Buddhist images and scriptures and other cultural relics excavated from Mt. Taesong are vivid evidence of the excellent talents of the people of Koguryo. Only when they see these sites and relics with their own eyes, can the working people acquire a real understanding of the long history of our country and the talents of our people, all of which is necessary in forming a strong sense of national pride. If a man is ignorant of the excellent cultural riches and tradi?tions that have been created by his nation through history, he may fall into national nihilism and look up to and worship other countries

Of the historical sites and relics, those which need to be rehabili?tated should be selected properly.

There is no need to rehabilitate all the historical sites and relics indiscriminately. Only representative ones which have educational significance and are capable of showing the excellence of our nation?al culture should be rehabilitated.

The leader has instructed that the investigation and excavation of the site of the Anhak Palace should be undertaken on a full scale, and all the relics of the palace restored to the original state. He also said that the wall of the fort on Mt. Taesong should be rebuilt only in part, and that the wall gate and the pavilions, like the one on the Jangsu Peak, should be rehabilitated. You must, in accordance with the leader sinstructions, draw up a comprehensive plan for the rehabili?tation of the historical sites and relics on Mt. Taesong. You must define the proper order of priorities for this project so as to concen?trate the construction effort.

When rehabilitating historical sites and relics, you must consult historians for full scientific substantiation, and on the basis of this you must undertake the work, so as not to reconstruct them in dis?agreement with their historical time period and facts or not to mod?ernize them.

Legends and historical stories about Mt. Taesong should also be collected and put in order.

From ancient times Mt. Taesong has been the source of many

interesting legends and stories of gallant struggle that show our peo?ple stories ardent patriotism. Certainly, legends and historical stories con?tain fantastic expressions and exaggerations, but they reflect our peo?ple stress resourcefulness, courage, beautiful sentiments and simple aspi?rations.

Historical stories and legends are part of the valuable cultural her?itage of our nation, so they must be searched out and collected exten?sively. If they are well arranged, from the point of view of literature, and compiled into books, they can be used effectively in enriching the national sentiments of the working people and in widening their general knowledge of the history and culture of their country. In addi?tion, the historical stories and legends which are of great educational significance should be adapted for the screen or for the stage.

You must adopt concrete measures in order to manage and pre?serve historical sites and relics through the years.

If you officials pay attention only to the construction works, now being undertaken in all parts of the country, and neglect the work of preserving historical sites and relics, valuable cultural artifacts may be destroyed or damaged.

At the time of constructing Kim II Sung University immediately after liberation, the great leader, finding that the university had been sited on the location of a mud wall of the Koguryo period, visited the site in person and relocated it to Ryongnam Hill. He is always con?cerned about the preservation of our cultural heritage and has earnest?ly instructed that historical sites and relics should be well preserved and kept up. But the practice of building houses or constructing roads on the sites of historical vestiges and relics or locating domestic ani?mal sheds in the area of ancient tombs has not yet disappeared. Such a practice should not occur any longer.

Mass education should be intensified so that all the working peo?ple value the cultural heritage of our nation and take good care of his?torical sites and relics. In particular, younger people, students and schoolchildren must be taught to treasure the cultural artifacts of our nation and retrain from damaging historical sites and relics.

The acts of destroying or vandalizing historical sites and relics must be seriously combatted. Whoever undertakes a construction pro?ject in the area of historical sites and relics or damages cultural arti?facts, in violation of state regulations and rules, must be called into account for his actions.

It is important for the officials in charge of the preservation of cul?tural relics to enhance the sense of their responsibility and role. Managing and preserving cultural relics attentively is their duty to the Party and the people. But their work attitude shows that they lack a sense of their heavy responsibility and the honour of managing the valuable wealth of the country. They also appear to lack enthusiasm for work. For?merly, the work of preserving cultural relics was conducted under the direction of the Ministry of Culture, but this ministry was ineffectual and disregarded this work.

Acquainting himself in detail with the work of preserving cultural

heritage last February, the leader saw to it that the function of manag?ing cultural relics was transferred from the Ministry of Culture to the Ministry of the Interior. Recently he has adopted legal measures to organize cultural relic preservation companies in provinces and cities.

Party organizations must intensify political work among the work?ers in charge of the preservation of cultural relics. Thus, these work?ers must always be made to bear in mind that the leader is greatly concerned about this work and work with a strong sense of responsi?bility. In this way a new advance will be made in implementing our Party spolicy of preserving cultural sites and relics.

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