

***LET US ENHANCE THE SENSE OF RESPONSIBILITY AND ROLE OF  
TEACHERS IN THE UNIVERSAL ELEVEN-YEAR COMPULSORY  
EDUCATION***

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Talk to Senior Officials of the Department of Education of the  
Central Committee of the Workers' Party of Korea  
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Some time ago the great leader proclaimed the law on introducing universal ten-year compulsory education and one-year compulsory preschool education. The 11-year compulsory education programme, the first of its kind in our country, is a landmark measure for raising the standard of compulsory education to a higher stage, in keeping with the requirements of the developing reality and for further bringing the socialist educational system to perfection.

Education is important in that it trains the younger generation to be successors to the revolution who are knowledgeable, morally sound and physically fit; it is a fundamental matter that decides the rise and fall of a nation. History shows that no country or nation can attain prosperity without education. Our country, which had been very backward in the past owing to the protracted feudal fetters and the colonial rule of Japanese imperialism, has now come to gain world prominence as a socialist country developed in all respects of politics, the economy and culture. This is the result of the leader attaching importance to education since the days immediately after liberation and channelling great efforts into the education of the younger generation.

Though pressed by many an urgent problem immediately after liberation, the great leader Comrade Kim Il Sung placed the production of pencils on the agenda of the First Session of the Provisional People's Committee of North Korea, and took various measures to eliminate illiteracy and develop educational work. After the war he introduced compulsory primary education and secondary education in succession, followed by universal nine-year compulsory technical education in 1967. And today he has set up the universal 11-year compulsory education system.

The period when pupils receive universal 11-year compulsory education is the most important period in their growth. In this period they are equipped with the essentials of the outlook on the world and acquire general secondary knowledge with which they can get higher education. If the younger generation is well educated under the universal 11-year compulsory education programme, in their days at university, they will be able to establish a revolutionary outlook on the world and acquire in full basic, expert knowledge. They will also be able to involve themselves in various forms of study-while-

working system to get higher education. Moreover, in case they serve in the People's Army or engage in labour in factories, they can acquire a revolutionary outlook on the world by training themselves in organizational life.

The one-year compulsory preschool education and ten-year compulsory education programmes to be introduced this year will be of great significance in easing the strain on manpower felt in the country. At the moment our country is suffering an acute shortage of manpower. Every sector of the national economy demands manpower. With more manpower we can build more power stations, coal mines and railways to ease the strain on electricity, coal and transport. We can also further improve the people's standard of living by accelerating the construction of dwelling houses in urban and rural communities and reclaiming tidal flats on a large scale. A lot of labour is needed also to carry out ahead of schedule the six-year plan of the national economy put forward at the Fifth Party Congress. Nevertheless, the manpower resources for replenishment are not large at the moment owing to the aftermath of the last Fatherland Liberation War. This shortage of manpower is expected to last for some years to come. In this situation if the 11-year compulsory education programme is introduced in the way of educating pupils until they are 16 years old as before and then for two more years, it will cause a greater dearth of manpower. This is why the leader ensured that the 11-year compulsory education programme be introduced by providing preschool education for one year and advancing the school age by one year. One-year compulsory preschool education and universal ten-year compulsory education is an advantageous system in that it enables all the rising generation to receive compulsory education from the age of five to working age at the same time as avoiding strain on the manpower the national economy needs.

The universal 11-year compulsory education system is an excellent one when viewed from the aspect of children's intellectual development. Children's intellects develop on a full scale from the age of five or six. The things they see, feel and experience at that age remain long in their memories. The leader says that he often followed his father to school at the age of five and saw him teaching pupils, and he still remembers it clearly.

In order to inquire into the possible hindrance to children's intellectual development by the introduction of ten-year compulsory education in the way of advancing their school age by one year, the great leader ensured that 40 schools across the country, including Namsan Senior School in Pyongyang, in one year and 400 schools the following year enrolled six-year-old children and gave them trial education. And, 92 per cent of the pupils in the first year of the primary-school course of Namsan Senior School in Pyongyang, got top marks; the pupils at the other schools where the system was tried out, too, obtained satisfactory results. This shows that advancing the children's age of enrolment in school by one year conforms with the development of their intellects.

Ours is the only country in the world, which has introduced 11-year free compulsory education. We can be justifiably proud before the world of the introduction of such high-level compulsory education as 11-year free compulsory education in a short span of time, as we started from scratch after liberation. With due pride and dignity for this, we must strive to implement the system with success and ensure that the advantages of the socialist educational system are brought into full play in practice.

The first and most important thing in introducing universal 11-year compulsory education is to prepare teachers well and enhance their sense of responsibility and role.

Teachers are directly responsible for education, the training of the younger generation to be heirs to the revolutionary cause of Juche, to be the reserves for the construction of socialism and communism. Our Party was trustful of teachers when it put pupils, the future of the country, under their charge. They have assumed a grave duty before the Party and the revolution to train the younger generation to be excellent persons who are qualified intellectually, morally and physically. With the introduction of universal 11-year compulsory education, all youths and children in our country will spend a great part of their time in school until working age and acquire qualifications and traits befitting social beings through school education. Needless to say, home and social education is important in the education of young people. But school education is fundamental, and its success depends entirely on the role of teachers. Their education of young people in school decides whether or not their pupils will become excellent men and women who faithfully serve the country and their fellow citizens. Since olden times it has been said that an excellent man has an excellent mother at his back and, an excellent disciple an excellent mentor at his back. This is not an empty saying.

A teacher is an educator who trains pupils to be ardent revolutionaries with communist ideological consciousness.

Education in socialist society is not the simple teaching of knowledge, as in capitalist society; it is an important undertaking to imbue the pupils with communist ideology and train them to be fully developed communists. We are in need of people who have acquired our Party's ideology and who sincerely serve the Party and revolution, and their country and fellow citizens. We do not need those who are not faithful in their service for the Party and revolution and their country and fellow citizens, no matter how much efficient knowledge they have acquired. Therefore, our teachers, before being educators who inculcate knowledge into their pupils, should become educators who train the younger generation to be true revolutionaries who are unfailingly faithful to the Party and the revolution. As a matter of course, this does not mean that the imbuing of pupils with the knowledge necessary for understanding and transforming nature and society and with the ability to apply it, may be neglected. In the true sense of the word, a school is an institute which teaches knowledge. At school pupils learn through teachers about nature and

society. It is a duty of teachers to educate pupils so that they can acquire the knowledge needed for understanding and transforming nature and society, and the ability to apply it.

In order for teachers to fulfil their honourable mission and duty as educators, they should possess full qualifications and ennobling communist traits.

Their qualifications are a fundamental factor that decides the success of education. In the long run, they find their expression in the academic attainments of their pupils. It is natural that if their qualifications are high, their pupils' school records improve, whereas their pupils' records are poor when the teachers' qualifications are inadequate. In other words, the pupils' academic records are in direct proportion to the teachers' qualifications. Teachers with full qualifications can attract the pupils' attention during lessons, develop their thinking and bring the contents of their teaching home to them. Teachers with poor qualifications cannot conduct lessons confidently and on their own initiative. Moreover, science and technology is developing without interruption, and the contents of secondary education are continually supplemented by fresh scientific and technological achievements. In this situation teachers cannot educate the younger generation as required by the developing reality unless they improve their qualifications. When universal 11-year compulsory education is introduced in real earnest from the new academic year, we will need a large number of teachers. In order to provide the number of teachers needed for introducing universal 11-year compulsory education, we cannot but reinforce the ranks of teachers of primary and senior middle schools with less-qualified teachers who have finished the short-term teacher training course. It goes without saying that the teachers who have finished the training course after graduating from secondary schools or colleges will be inferior to those who have graduated from the universities of education or from the teacher training colleges. Therefore, we should work closely with the teachers and direct deep attention to improving their qualifications at an earlier date and cultivating communist traits in them.

Due to the characteristics of their age and mentality, the pupils in primary and senior middle schools do not remain indifferent to other people's words and behaviour; they try to model themselves on them. Therefore, every movement of the teacher who is always with pupils and teaches them exerts a great influence on the formation of their character and their growth. As the saying goes, a clear spring produces a clear stream. It is only when the teachers possess ennobling ideological and mental traits that pupils will model themselves after them to become excellent adults. Teachers must become models for pupils in their daily work and life. If they speak and behave in a rude manner, oblivious of their position, their pupils will imitate them and behave in the same manner even in society. As the proverb goes, what is learned in the cradle is carried to the tomb. Likewise, the bad habits learned in younger days are hard to correct. Then, what are the important traits and qualifications for teachers?

Faithfulness to the Party and the leader is the most important trait for them. As they educate and instruct pupils, they, above all people, should be unfailingly faithful to the Party and the leader. Otherwise, they will not be able to train pupils to be revolutionaries loyal to the Party and the leader, to be builders of socialism. They should cherish pure loyalty to the Party and the leader. They should uphold and follow the Party and the leader with unpretentious sincerity, bend their minds first to the Party and the revolution before caring for themselves, and work devotedly for their country and fellow citizens, and for the younger generation. Their work and life should be steeped in faithfulness to the Party and the leader, and to the country and the people. In addition, they should be sincere and wholehearted, and must not seek their private interests or fame. They should acquire high cultural attainments and profound humane traits, and always behave with modesty, simplicity and decorum.

Teachers should acquire the qualities of a mother. Mothers are anxious for their children and devote themselves to them all their lives. They always care about their children's food and clothing, to begin with, and then care about their future careers. When their children commit mistakes, they themselves worry more than anybody else and reason with them ten or even one hundred times to lead them along the right path. Teachers should look after pupils and lead them with the affection of mothers. Only when they have become the pupils' mothers can they make stronger demands and maintain rigorous discipline. When pupils give a wide berth to them without opening their hearts, teachers should realize that they lack the qualities of mothers, and make efforts to acquire such qualities. In order for teachers to train themselves to be revolutionaries unfailingly faithful to the Party and the leader, and to possess the qualities of mothers, they should first equip themselves firmly with the Juche-orientated revolutionary outlook on the world.

The Juche idea authored by the great leader is the only guiding ideology of our Party. It is the most scientific and revolutionary outlook on the world which the people of our era should acquire. When they are firmly equipped with the Juche idea, teachers can take the right approach towards nature and society, and meet the requirements of that idea in the education of pupils, free from the influence of the bourgeois and feudal-Confucian ideas, revisionism, flunkeyism, dogmatism and all manner of other outdated ideas. We should bring the principles of the Juche idea, its correctness and indestructible vitality home to teachers so that they arm themselves firmly with the Juche-orientated outlook on the world, and work and live at all times as required by the Juche idea.

It is important to strengthen revolutionary organizational life among teachers. Through life in a revolutionary organization, a person cultivates the spirit of loving his organization and the collective, pinpoints in himself such various ideological maladies as conceit, egoism, a tendency towards uncontrolled behaviour, timidity and self-protectionism, and overcomes them. A person who is divorced from organizational life and out of the control of the organization is

liable to grow lax ideologically and arrogant, and in the long run, become degenerate and a traitor to the revolution. Just as a person becomes highly resistant to viruses, and remains healthy and free from illness when he regularly trains his body, so he can acquire the ideological and spiritual qualities befitting a revolutionary free from any ideological impurities only when he tempers his mind continually through life in the organization.

For the revolutionary organizational life to be intensified among teachers, a new system of organizational life review should be introduced. If the organizational life is conducted in the way of reviewing one's life and work only once a month at a gathering, as is done at present, they cannot be educated and tempered in a proper organizational and ideological way. In order to intensify revolutionary organizational life among the Party members and other working people, our Party introduced a new organizational life review system first in the field of art and literature. The correctness and viability of the system was fully verified in this field. Our Party plans to introduce this system in all sectors. The field of education should also introduce this system so as to criticize and rectify the mistakes revealed among teachers before it is too late, and establish a healthy tone of organizational life. In such meetings, teachers should criticize themselves in a frank manner concerning all mistakes, no matter how insignificant, revealed in the preparation of lessons, in the 45-minute lessons and in the guidance of extracurricular activities. When they do not note their own mistakes, they should be criticized and made to correct these mistakes. It should also be ensured that all teachers participate in organizational life voluntarily with a correct approach to the organization, and fulfil the assignments the organization entrusts to them in good time and with sincerity.

Teachers should be educated and tempered in revolutionary practice. A person's ideology is tempered, transformed and consolidated in revolutionary practice. Ideology that has not been consolidated in revolutionary practice cannot become a person's faith, because it vacillates easily in the face of small difficulties and is apt to be changed following the situation just like a sail before an adverse wind. The main revolutionary practice for teachers is teaching, the implementation of the Party's policy of education. Through teaching, they should transform themselves in a revolutionary fashion, become fused with the working class and, in this process, cultivate faithfulness to the Party and the leader. In the manufacturing enterprises a worker who strives to fulfil the plan of the national economy ahead of schedule is appraised as faithful to the Party and the leader. Likewise, in the field of education a person who makes efforts to train the younger generation to be fully developed communists through teaching should be appraised as faithful to the Party and the leader. In the field of education, how far teachers have remodelled themselves on a revolutionary and working-class pattern should be estimated by their teaching, their main revolutionary task.

Teachers should seek much experience in real life. This is all the more important for the teachers in the sector of general education. What the teachers in the primary and senior middle schools see is relatively limited. Only when they gain experience in the thick of socialist construction can they realize the correctness and viability of our Party's policies, cherish the dignity and pride of waging revolution under the leadership of the great leader, and emulate the revolutionary spirit of the working class and other working people who are performing exploits in socialist construction. They should go among the heroic working class and other working people instead of confining themselves to the classroom; then they can learn much from them. As the saying goes, seeing is believing. They should also frequently visit the revolutionary battle sites and historic places, Pyongyang City and important factories and enterprises. Taking pupils to the countryside to help in the rice-transplanting season is a good opportunity for them to train themselves. A man tempers his ideology and willpower in labour and cultivates the spirit of being industrious. Teachers should take the campaign of transplanting rice seedlings as a good opportunity for ideological and physical training, and assist the rural communities with sincerity.

An important thing for teachers in getting qualifications befitting educators is to acquire profound and many-sided knowledge, and efficient way of teaching.

They should have a correct understanding of the great leader's ideas and our Party's policies on education. The ideas and policies clarify the basic doctrine and principles of socialist pedagogy, the contents and methods of education, and all other matters related to education. Teachers should have a full understanding of them. Only then can they embody the Party's policies in teaching and educate the younger generation in line with the Party's ideas and intentions so as to train them to be proficient revolutionaries who will be able to render sincere contributions to the socialist motherland.

Teachers should become persons of ability proficient in their own subjects. Their acquisition of wide and profound knowledge of their specialities is a prerequisite to improving the scientific and theoretical level of education. To teach one thing, they should know ten. The teachers' teaching of their special subjects is aimed at giving pupils a profound knowledge of nature and society. Unless teachers are fully prepared in science and theory, they cannot improve the pupils' scholarly performance.

Teachers should be well versed in many-sided knowledge. Pupils at primary and senior middle schools are highly sensitive and inquisitive. They entertain a great deal of curiosity and questions about the things and phenomena happening around them. This is why they want to know about the many matters they see and feel in their lives, and ask perplexing questions. In order to give correct answers to their searching questions, teachers should have many-sided knowledge. If a teacher fails to give a correct answer, it might lessen the pupils' respect for and trust in him. Then he cannot exercise the authority of an educator. Unless teachers are well-informed, they

cannot guide and control the pupils' study in a substantially deep-going way, either. They should have knowledge not only of their specialities but also related subjects, history, geography, art and literature, and be well-informed of the situation both at home and abroad and general knowledge.

Teachers should have a correct method of teaching. If they teach by cramming or force the pupils to learn by rote, the pupils cannot have a full, theoretical understanding of what they are taught nor cultivate the ability to apply it. Teachers should conduct lessons by the heuristic method, the main method of teaching. After estimating how far pupils understand a lesson, teachers should ask questions at times when they feel it necessary to make use of what they have already taught. They should also inspire voluntariness and activeness for study in the pupils by using actual materials and visual aids. They should ensure that the contents of teaching are logical, systematic and sequential so that pupils can have a deep understanding of the essence of things. I was told that Taedongmun Primary School in Pyongyang is now giving substantial lessons through the heuristic method by making use of visual aids. The school has prepared 20,000 teaching aids for lessons and is using as examples 7,000 teaching aids of 300 kinds in arithmetic lessons. Teaching aids should not only be produced and supplied by the state but also made by schools themselves, and made wide use of in teaching. Teachers in all schools should teach by the heuristic method, just like the teachers at Taedongmun Primary School.

In order to acquire profound and many-sided knowledge and develop an excellent method of teaching, teachers should establish a revolutionary way of study, and study diligently.

The main shortcoming revealed among them at present is that they do not study diligently. Some officials complain that teachers have not much time to study because they have to do a lot of social work; this is but an excuse. A person must make time to study; nobody will grant him all the time he needs. A person who claims that he cannot study for lack of time, does not study even if he has time. Unless one studies, one cannot keep in step with the developing realities. Then, one begins to lag behind the times before even being aware of it. A book is an invaluable life companion and a treasure house of the profound knowledge. Teachers should set distinct goals and read many books in a purposeful and far-reaching way. They should become zealous readers and read many books not only on their specialities but also on politics, art, literature, history and other fields. Study should not be left to whenever one feels like it, but be disciplined. As some teachers are still lazy in their study, we should not simply emphasize unequivocally the need to study. The control of their study should be exercised by sections, schools, cities and counties, so that they cannot avoid studying for long. In addition, strict discipline should be established in the assessment of their grades to excite a greater enthusiasm among them for study. In the testing for assessing their grades, not only their specialities but also related subjects and foreign languages should be tested



simultaneously.

It is important to conduct correspondence education and reeducation efficiently among teachers. Less-qualified teachers should be involved in the correspondence education system unconditionally and trained in a systematic way. And a well-regulated reeducation system should be set up in the field of education to reeducate the teachers who have graduated from universities. It is not true that a university graduate knows everything. And even though he has graduated with a revolutionary outlook on the world, he may become corrupt if he does not continue to train himself ideologically. Graduate teachers should not be regarded as perfect and committed only to lessons. We should establish a teacher training course and run two terms every year to train them in ideology continuously and improve their qualifications.

In order to train in large numbers excellent teachers with full qualifications of educators and ennobling communist traits, we should intensify teacher education.

The universities of education and teacher training colleges are 'pedigree centres' for training primary and senior middle school teachers, and teachers' qualifications and traits are largely dependent on teacher education. Only when these universities and colleges train in great numbers teachers who are faithful to the Party and the leader and are fully prepared politically and ideologically, scientifically and theoretically, can the ranks of primary and senior middle school teachers be built up with efficient teachers to improve the quality of the universal 11-year compulsory education. We should make a clean sweep of the neglect of teacher education among the officials and provide in full conditions for intensifying this education.

In the academic year 1972-1973, 17 new universities of education and teacher training colleges started, with the result that reliable bases for training educational cadres were built up in every province, and the number of trainee teachers increased markedly. Therefore, we should build up the ranks of teachers in teacher training firmly. The ranks should be built up with selected teachers who have a lofty spirit of serving the Party, the working class and the people, and who are fully prepared in science and theory. Furthermore, picking out teachers at these universities and colleges to divert them to other sectors should be banned. If prepared teachers are frequently diverted to other sectors, the ranks of teachers in teacher training can in no way be built up firmly; then the universities and colleges cannot train efficient teachers.

In order to train a large number of efficient teachers, excellent students should be enrolled in the universities of education and teacher training colleges. The great leader has stressed on more than one occasion that excellent students should be recommended to the universities of education on a preferential basis. Nevertheless, this instruction of the leader has not yet been implemented properly. In the future, excellent students should be recommended first to the universities of education and teacher training colleges, and then to

other universities and colleges.

The textbooks of the universities of education and teacher training colleges should be examined for the compilation of textbooks embodying the monolithic ideological system of the Party and working-class principles, and secure material and technical foundations should be laid for them. The Kiyang Tractor Plant is now manufacturing more tractors for teaching practice than its monthly quotas to send them to schools. This is excellent. In future, when the factories and enterprises manufacture new products, they should launch a movement to send the best ones first to the universities of education and teacher training colleges to lay solid material foundations for teacher training. We must improve the quality of teacher education at all costs and train in a great number efficient teachers who are prepared politically and ideologically, scientifically and theoretically at the universities of education and teacher training colleges.

We should enhance social concern for teachers. Social development is possible through the development of people, and training them to be developed beings with high ideological consciousness and creative ability starts with education. Social development can either be promoted or not in accordance with how teachers educate people. If teachers train pupils efficiently at school and send them out into the world, the work of the League of Socialist Working Youth, the economic affairs and all the other work will progress smoothly. That is why the great leader conferred the honourable title of career revolutionary on teachers. But some teachers do not feel the due dignity and pride of educators. Needless to say, there might be several reasons for this, one being that the society lacks the spirit of respecting and giving prominence to them. From the old days there has been a good trait in our country of respecting teachers and giving prominence to them in society. Our people even highly respected teachers' wives, calling them Madam, to say nothing of teachers themselves. Apparently because of the introduction of free, compulsory education, such a good trait is disappearing nowadays. The teachers exemplary in the education of the younger generation should be given wide publicity through newspapers, magazines, pictorials and other publications, and through radio and TV broadcasting. And exemplary teachers should be given seats on the platform at meetings and official commendations.

Pupils should be encouraged to call at their teachers' houses on their birthdays to offer congratulations, send them greetings on New Year's Day, and drop in on their Alma Mater on their visits to their hometowns during their working lives after their school days to greet their mentors. It is praiseworthy that a person remembers his or her Alma Mater and the mentors there after graduating from school. This is by no means wrong. A person who fails to appreciate the teacher who taught him does not know even the ABC of morality; such a person cannot enjoy the trust and love of the society and collective no matter what he does at any place, and he can neither be faithful to the Party and the leader nor serve the people with sincerity. Loyalty to

the Party and the leader, to the country and fellow citizens does not come into being out of the blue; it springs from the intense sense of obligation between the people.

Teachers should be given preferential treatment in society, and Party organizations at all levels should pay deep attention to their work and life. Officials do not concern themselves about the life of teachers on the excuse that the problem of food, clothing and housing in our country has been solved now. This is wrong. Since the teachers' tasks and role are important, officials should pay deep attention to their life and accord them preferential treatment. Then teachers will devote themselves to teaching without being anxious about their everyday lives.

Party organizations at all levels should always show interest in the work of primary and senior middle schools.

The senior officials of the provincial, city and county Party committees are less interested in the work of education, alleging that success in education is not immediately visible. Quite a few chief secretaries of county Party committees have placed education under the charge of a few officials in the department of education, and they return from their inspection of factories, enterprises or cooperative farms without visiting the schools beside them. They do not bother to inquire into the life of teachers.

Whether the social concern about teachers is enhanced or not depends on how the senior officials of Party committees at all levels work with them. Party organizations at all levels and their senior officials should not only build up the ranks of teachers firmly and provide proper guidance to them for their faithful organizational life but also frequently go among them to explain our Party's lines and policies, inspect classes at work and to find solution in time for the difficulties in their work and life. Then the social concern for them will be enhanced on its own accord, and school education will become more successful.

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