

THE JUCHE PHILOSOPHY IS AN ORIGINAL REVOLUTIONARY PHILOSOPHY

Discourse Published in Kulloja, Theoretical Magazine of the Central
Committee of the Workers' Party of Korea

July 26, 1996

KIM JONG IL

An opinion has recently been raised that some of our social scientists had expressed a wrong view contrary to our Party's idea in explaining the Juche philosophy, and that this view had been disseminated abroad as well.

These social scientists still attempt to explain the basic principles of the Juche philosophy from the point of view of the general law of the development of the material world, instead of explaining them in the direction of clarifying the law of social movement. The proponents of this view say that their argument is aimed at proving that the Juche philosophy is a new development also of Marxist materialistic dialectics. In explaining and propagating the Juche philosophy we do not need to convince people that the Juche philosophy is a new development of Marxist materialistic dialectics. It is true that our Party has not taken a dogmatic approach to Marxist materialistic dialectics but analysed it from the point of view of Juche and has given new explanations to a number of problems. However, some development of materialism and dialectics does not constitute the basic content of the Juche philosophy.

The Juche philosophy is an original philosophy which has been evolved and systematized with its own principles. The historic contribution made by the Juche philosophy to the development of philosophical thoughts lies not in its advancement of Marxist materialistic dialectics, but in its clarification of new philosophical principles centred on man.

The Marxist philosophy raised the relationship between material and consciousness, between being and thinking, as the fundamental question of philosophy and proved the primacy of material, the primacy of being and, on this basis, elucidated that the world is made of material and changed and developed by

the motion of material. The Juche philosophy has raised the relationship between the world and man, and man's position and role in the world, as the fundamental question of philosophy, clarified the philosophical principle that the man is the master of everything and that he decides everything and, on this basis, illuminated the absolutely correct way of shaping man's destiny. The Marxist philosophy raised as its major task the clarification of the essence of the material world and the general law of its motion, whereas the Juche philosophy has raised as its important task the elucidation of man's essential characteristics and the law of social movement, man's movement. Therefore, the Juche philosophy is an original philosophy which is fundamentally different from the preceding philosophy in its task and principles. That is why we should not understand the Juche philosophy as a philosophy that has developed materialistic dialectics, nor should we attempt to prove the originality and advantages of the Juche philosophy by arguing one way or the other about the essence of the material world and the general law of its motion which were clarified by the Marxist philosophy. You cannot explain the Juche philosophy in the framework of the preceding philosophy because it is a philosophy that has clarified new philosophical principles. If you attempt to do so, you will not only fail to prove the originality of the Juche philosophy, but instead make it obscure and fail to understand the essence of Juche philosophy correctly.

Having defined the essential qualities of man for the first time in history, the Juche philosophy has held up man as the best qualified and most powerful being in the world and advanced a new idea on the world that the world is dominated and transformed by man.

The new outlook on the world established by the Juche philosophy does not deny the world outlook of dialectical materialism. The Juche philosophy regards the world outlook of dialectical materialism as its premise. The Juche view of the world that the world is dominated and transformed by man is inconceivable separately from the materialistic dialectical understanding of the essence of the objective material world and the general law of its motion. From the idealistic view that the world is something mysterious you cannot draw the conclusion that man dominates the world, and from the metaphysical view that the world is immutable you cannot infer that man can transform the world. The Juche view of the world that the world is dominated and transformed by man can only be established when the

materialistic dialectical understanding of the world that the world is made of material and ceaselessly changes and develops is recognized. In spite of a number of limitations and immaturities of the Marxist materialistic dialectics, its basic principles are scientific and valid. That is why we say that the Juche philosophy regards materialistic dialectics as its premise.

That the world outlook of the materialistic dialectics is the premise for the Juche philosophy does not mean that the Juche philosophy has merely inherited and developed the materialistic dialectics. Although it would be impossible to acquire a scientific understanding of the world and transform it without the materialistic dialectical understanding of the objective material world, you cannot draw the conclusion that man is the master of the world and plays a decisive role in transforming the world simply from the proposition of materialism that the world is made of material and from the dialectical principle that the world ceaselessly changes and develops. Only on the basis of the clarification of man's essential qualities which distinguish man radically from all the other material beings can man's outstanding position and role as the master of the world capable of transforming the world be clarified. Only on the basis of man's essential qualities as a social being with independence, creativity and consciousness as scientifically clarified by the Juche philosophy has the basic principle that man is the master of the world and plays the decisive role in transforming the world been clarified.

By establishing the Juche outlook on social history, the Juche view of history, on the basis of the man-centred philosophical principle, the Juche philosophy has overcome the limitations of the preceding socio-historical view and effected a radical change in the socio-historical view and standpoint.

Marxist philosophy established socio-historical view of dialectical materialism, historical materialism, through the application of the general law of the development of the material world to social history. Of course, we do not deny the historic merit of historical materialism. Historical materialism made an important contribution to defeating the reactionary and unscientific socio-historical view which was based on idealism and metaphysics. In addition, since man lives in the objective material world and society is inseparably linked with nature, the general law of the development of the material world acts on social phenomena. However, if you overlook the social movement being governed by its own law and apply the general law of the development of the material world mechanically to

social phenomena, you cannot avoid acquiring one-sided understanding of social history.

The social movement changes and develops according to its own law.

The social movement is the movement of man who dominates and transforms the world. Man transforms nature to dominate and transform the objective material world. By transforming nature man creates material wealth and material conditions for his life. Transforming nature and creating material wealth is the endeavour to satisfy people's social demands and this work can only be done through people's social cooperation. People transform society to improve and perfect the relations of social cooperation. It is man who transforms both nature and society. While transforming nature and society, man transforms and develops himself continuously. The domination and transformation of the world by man are realized after all through the transformation of nature, society and himself, and the popular masses are the motive force of this undertaking. The popular masses create all the material and cultural wealth of society and develop social relations.

The social movement, the driving force of which is the popular masses, has characteristics which are different from those of the motion of nature. In nature motion takes place spontaneously through the interaction of material elements which exist objectively, whereas the social movement is caused and developed by the volitional action and role of the driving force. Therefore, if you apply the principles of materialistic dialectics which explain the general law of the development of the material world mechanically to social history, you cannot clarify correctly the essence of society and the law of social movement. The major limitation of the materialistic conception of history is that it failed to correctly expound the peculiar law of the social movement and explained the principles of the social movement mainly on the basis of the common character of the motion of nature and the social movement in that both of them are the motion of material.

Marxist materialistic conception of history broke down society into social being and social consciousness and attached determining significance to the social being; it also broke down the social structure into productive force and production relations, foundation and superstructure, and attached decisive significance to material production and economic relations. This means an unaltered application of the principle of materialistic dialectics to society, the principle that the world is of material and changes and develops in accordance with the general law of the

motion of material . The world, viewed by the founders of Marxism when applying the general law governing the material world to social history, is an integrity of not only nature but also man and society in that they are material beings. If you consider man as a part of the world, a material integrity, not as a social being with independence, creativity and consciousness, and apply the general law of the movement of the material world to social history, you cannot avoid seeing the socio-historical movement as a process of the history of nature.

Of course, society, too, changes and develops in accordance with a certain law, not by man's own will. But the action of law in society is fundamentally different from that of the law of nature. In nature the law works spontaneously regardless of man's activity, but in society the law works through man's independent, creative and conscious activities. Some of the laws of society governs every society in general irrespective of social systems, and some of them governs a particular society. Because all the social laws work through man's activity, they may work smoothly or their actions may be restrained or limited depending on man's activity.

When I say that social laws function through man's activity, I do not deny the objective character of social laws and possible spontaneity in the social movement. If a certain socio-economic condition is created, a social law corresponding to it functions inevitably and therefore it assumes an objective character as a natural law does. Spontaneity in the social movement is due to a relatively low level of man's independence, creativity and consciousness and to the absence of the social system under which people can display them to the full. With the growth in man's independence, creativity and consciousness and with the establishment of the social system which ensures a full display of these qualities, man will work better in keeping with the objective laws and the range of spontaneity will narrow. Social development is the process of the development of the masses' independence, creativity and consciousness. With the growth in these qualities and with the consummation of the social system capable of meeting their requirements, the society will develop more and more through the purposeful and conscious activities of the popular masses. This means that the law peculiar to the social movement, which changes and develops by the volitional action and role of the driving force, will work on a full scale.

Although the founders of Marxism established the materialistic dialectical concept of social history by applying the general law of the development

of the material world to social history, they themselves came across many problems in the practical social movement, problems which could not be resolved only by the general law of the development of the material world. So they attempted to overcome the one-sidedness of the materialistic dialectical concept of social history by advancing some theories, for example, that although social consciousness emerges as the reflection of the material and economic conditions, it reacts on these conditions and that although politics is defined by the economy, it reacts on the economy. However, the Marxist materialistic concept of history is, in essence, a view on social history which considers the common character of the motion of nature and the social movement as the main factor. This theory was unable to avoid the limitation of identifying the process of social development with that of natural history.

The fundamental difference between the Juche philosophy and the preceding philosophy results, in the final analysis, from a different understanding of man.

The Marxist philosophy defined the essence of man as the ensemble of social relations, but it failed to correctly expound the characteristics of man as a social being. The preceding theory explained the principle of the social movement mainly on the basis of the general law of the development of the material world, because it failed to clarify the essential qualities of social man. For the first time, the Juche philosophy gave a perfect elucidation of the unique qualities of man as a social being.

As clarified in the documents of our Party, man is a social being with independence, creativity and consciousness and nobody has expressed doubt about it. However, some social scientists maintain a wrong view in understanding how man became a social being with these qualities. Regarding the question of man's essential characteristics as the issue of the level of his development as a material being, they still assert that the origin of man's independence, creativity and consciousness should be sought in the diversity of the material components and the complexity of their combination and structure. This is, in fact, a view regarding man's essential qualities as the extension of natural and biological attributes, as their development and consummation. When talking about man as an organism, one can consider him in comparison with other organisms, or discuss the characteristics of his biological components and their combination and

structure. However, the man who is deliberated by the Juche philosophy is not only a highly developed organism but also lives and works with independence, creativity and consciousness which no other creatures have acquired. The origin of man's essential qualities must be sought not in the development of his features common with those of other material beings but in the characteristics unique to him. Man has acquired independence, creativity and consciousness, because he is a social being who forms a social collective and lives and works in a social relationship. These qualities of man are social attributes which are formed and developed through the socio-historical process of his working in the social relationship. Of course, these qualities of his would be inconceivable without his highly developed organic body. In the sense of his highly developed organic body, man can be said to be the highest product of evolution and the most developed material being. However, if man had not formed a social collective and had not lived and worked in the social relationship, he could not have developed as an independent, creative and conscious being no matter how developed his organic body may be. Without physical life man cannot have social and political integrity. However, it is not man's physical life itself that gives birth to his social and political integrity. Likewise, without his developed organic body his independence, creativity and consciousness would be inconceivable, but his biological characteristics themselves do not produce his social attributes. Man's social attributes can take shape and develop only through the process of his emergence and development as a social being, in other words, through the process of the historical development of his social activity and his social relationship. The history of social development is the history of development of man's independence, creativity and consciousness. This means that man's independence, creativity and consciousness are social attributes which are formed and developed socially and historically. Therefore, the philosophical consideration of man must start from the fact that man is a social being.

Nevertheless, some of our social scientists argue about the material components and their combination and structure, and relate them to man's essential qualities, preaching that the biological factors constitute the major content of the Juche philosophy. Their argument is a deviation that explains the Juche philosophy within the framework of Marxist dialectical materialism. It is only an attempt to justify the wrong evolutionary view which regards man's essential qualities as the

development and consummation of biological attributes.

Regarding man's essential qualities, it is important to have a correct understanding of the social being. The founders of Marxism, while raising the question of man's essence in social relationship, used the phrase social being as a concept meaning the material conditions and economic relations of social life which exist objectively and are reflected on social consciousness. Since they regarded man as a component of productive forces, as the ensemble of social relations, the phrase social being they used implied man as well. However, they did not use it as one having the particular meaning that defines man's essential qualities.

Systematizing the Juche philosophy, we used the term social being as one having the particular meaning that defines man's essential qualities. In the theory of the Juche philosophy man is the only social being in the world. Some social scientists, however, still insist that social wealth and social relations should also be included in the social being, obscuring the difference between man and social wealth and social relations. Social wealth and social relations are created and developed by man. Therefore, they cannot be included together in the concept that defines man's essential qualities. When referring to the Marxist philosophy, the phrase social being can, of course, be used as the founders of Marxism meant. But, if we understand the term social being in its conventional meaning when referring to the Juche philosophy, it will result in obscuring the understanding of man's essential qualities. The Juche philosophy is a new philosophy which has its own system and content, so its categories must not be understood in the conventional meaning.

One of the main reasons why these social scientists have committed a deviation in explaining and propagating the Juche philosophy is that they have not studied philosophical problems from the point of view of the requirement of revolutionary practice.

Theory must be based on practice and serve practice. A theory divorced from practice cannot correctly elucidate truth and is of no use. The great leader Comrade Kim Il Sung always studied philosophical problems proceeding from the demand of revolutionary practice and evolved the Juche philosophy in the course of giving scientific answers to urgent ideological and theoretical problems arising in revolutionary practice. Our Party has generalized the rich and profound

experiences of revolutionary practice, systematized the Juche philosophy in a comprehensive way and developed it in depth.

Revolutionary practice is a struggle to realize independence for the popular masses and it is the masses who carry out the struggle. Therefore, it is important in the study of philosophy to reflect the demands and aspirations of the popular masses correctly, evolve the theory by generalizing their experiences of struggle and make it the theory of the popular masses themselves. In the exploitative society the reactionary ruling class makes use of philosophy for defending and rationalizing their reactionary ruling system, trying to make it the monopoly of the philosophers who act as spokesman in their interests. They consider the popular masses to be ignorant people who have nothing to do with philosophy.

With a viewpoint and attitude that the popular masses are the masters of everything and the wisest people, our Party has evolved the Juche philosophy by reflecting their demand and aspirations and generalizing their struggle experiences, further developed it in depth and made it their weapon of struggle. This is the reason why the Juche philosophy is an absolute truth which meets the people's desire for and aspirations to independence and a popular philosophy which the masses easily understand and regard as their own weapon of struggle.

However, some of the social scientists are arguing about the questions which are of little practical significance in illuminating the road of shaping the destiny of the popular masses. We study philosophy essentially for the purpose of clarifying the principles and methodology by which to develop the society and shape the destiny of the popular masses. The development of society is guided by politics and it is none other than the Juche philosophy which clarifies the basic principles of politics which lead social development in the most straight way. In this sense, the Juche philosophy can be called a political philosophy.

Some social scientists say that they have explained the Juche philosophy as a philosophy which developed the dialectical materialism of Marxism in order to present the Juche idea to suit the characteristic of the external world. We must give a clear understanding of the Juche philosophy as a new revolutionary philosophy, not as a mere development of the preceding philosophy. It is a mistake to explain the Juche philosophy within the framework of the preceding philosophy on the grounds that it is presented to suit the characteristic of the external world or to disseminate the Juche philosophy with ideas which do not accord with the

fundamental principle of the Juche philosophy. Moreover, why should we argue about questions which are of no political importance and hardly of any theoretical and practical significance, shutting eyes to the demand of reality in the international arena, when internationally we have many theoretical and practical questions which urgently await correct answers to be given on the basis of the principles of the Juche philosophy? In presenting the Juche idea to the external world, we must explain correctly in relation to actual problems that the Juche philosophy is thoroughly an original philosophy and a new revolutionary philosophy. We must get rid of such a deviation not only in external dissemination but also in the research, study and education on the Juche philosophy.

The Juche philosophy is a revolutionary philosophy and political philosophy of our Party which illuminates the philosophical basis of the Juche idea and fundamental principles of the revolution. How to approach the Juche philosophy does not merely concern philosophical theories, but is related to the viewpoint and attitude towards the Party's ideology. We must accept the Party's ideology as the absolute truth, defend it resolutely and keep it as a revolutionary conviction, and thus understand, interpret and propagate the Juche philosophy correctly.

We must feel a great pride and confidence in having such a great political philosophy as the Juche philosophy, deeply understand its principles and apply them fully to the practical activities of the revolution and construction. We must analyse and judge all the social phenomena thoroughly on the basis of the principles of the Juche philosophy and dynamically accelerate the revolution and construction by uniting the popular masses solidly around the Party and enhancing the role of the motive force as the Juche philosophy requires.

Our scientists and people must study and follow the Juche philosophy, but they must also know the philosophical ideas of Marxism-Leninism. The social scientists in particular must be well acquainted with the preceding philosophy. In studying the preceding philosophy, it is important to distinguish limitations and immaturity, along with progressive and positive aspects. Only when we know correctly not only its historical achievements but also limitations of the period and ideological immaturity can we prevent deviations of dogmatic attitude towards preceding theories and acquire a deep understanding of the originality and superiority of the Juche philosophy. Social scientists must study and master the Juche philosophy and on this basis and in the light of its principles, pay deep attention to seeing

clearly the limitations and immaturity of the preceding philosophy along with its merits.

In addition, we must strictly guard against all heterogeneous trends of philosophy which are contrary to the Juche philosophy and ensure the purity of the Juche philosophy. The Juche philosophy is the most advantageous and viable philosophy which reflects the demand of the revolutionary practice and the truthfulness and validity of which have been proved by revolutionary practice. The fact that the Juche philosophy is attracting more attention on the international arena and the followers of the Juche idea are increasing in number clearly demonstrates that the Juche philosophy gives absolutely correct answers to the questions of revolutionary practice. Our social scientists must have an unshakable conviction of the scientific accuracy, truthfulness, originality and superiority of the Juche philosophy and analyse and judge all the philosophical theories with the Juche philosophy as a guideline, thus preventing infiltration of any heterogeneous trend of philosophy into the Juche philosophy.

All the social scientists must study the Juche philosophy in depth and breadth and propagate it in line with the Party's intention and, by doing so, exalt its greatness and further increase its attraction.