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A Brief Introduction and Assessment of the Juche Ideology

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Summary:

Introduction to the Juche ideology as formulated at the KWP's 6th Congress

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A brief introduction and assessment of the *juche* ideology

The *juche* ideology is the unique ideology of the Korean Worker's party that they described as merely the application of Marxism-Leninism to the Korean circumstances during the KWP's 5th Congress in 1970. In the DPRK's press and propaganda materials, we also came across the expression "Kimilsungism", put into foreigners' mouths. Before the 6th Congress of the KWP, they separated the *juche* ideology from Marxist foundations and set it up as the only correct worldview in today's age, which is the highest-level ideology of all times as well.

Kim Il Sung formulated the essentials of the ideology at the KWP's 6th Congress in the following:

"The *juche* idea is an ideology that concentrates on people, places people into the center of every thought, and puts everything into its service. It is a revolutionary theory that serves for the liberation of the working class. The problems that emerge during the transformation of the people and society, during economic and cultural development can only be resolved according to the wishes and demands of the working masses who yearn for liberation, if we treat the *juche* idea as our guiding ideology and apply it in practice as well. The ideological and material strongholds of communism can be taken only in this case."

If we put this next to the other thought that Kim Il Sung voiced at the 5th Congress, and also interpret it in an international sense, i.e., in the relations between countries, how the "Kimilsungists" do anyway too, then we get the main message of the full *juche* ideology:

"The *juche*... means that we are looking at the revolution and the building in our own country with the eye of the owner. It means that those who implement *juche*, cling to the standpoint of independence, that is, they are liberated from the dependency on others; they think with their own head, and trust their own power; they effectuate the revolutionary spirit of relying on one's own strength; they solve their own questions between themselves in all circumstances at their own risk..."

Kim Il Sung, himself, did not say much more or more essentials about the *juche*. His disciples in various *juche* circles and conferences however are trying to form a "philosophy", or even a "philosophical system" around the *juche* idea.

Comparing the *juche* with dialectical and historical materialism as ideologies, this "philosophy" and worldview stands out mostly with its primitiveness, subjective idealism, and metaphysical one-sidedness. It absolutizes independence versus the historical tendency of mutual dependencies, nationalism versus internationalism, economic independence versus the natural tendency of economic integration, national culture versus all of mankind's culture, the so-called Korean socialist culture against historical traditions, the role of the leader versus the role of the masses, etc.

This idea is mainly the product of the particular Korean circumstances, but its Korean advocates mention ambitious plans: they formulate their messages in this spirit to the so-called third world, and to the countries of the Non-Aligned Movement above all, and on the long term, they are aspiring to lead the movement itself. This is reflected by the part of the congress report that deals with international issues for example. Thus it is not a coincidence that - even though due to pragmatic reasons

the report always mentions the socialist countries and the communist movement first - it essentially talks about the third world and the Non-Aligned Movement in detail, giving a real program about the things that need to be done.

The part of juche ideology about "independence" becomes only an empty phrase in the practical politics of the DPRK due to the propaganda about the cult of personality and the "providence of the leader". In circumstances like this, the creativity and initiative spirit of a man are not only not liberated, but on the contrary, they become bound in shackles.