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GOODFRIENDS



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[Hot Topics]

“Competition For the Three Great Revolutions: Culpable For Illegal Activities”

Food Processing Factory, *Seoheung* County, Quarrels With Workers on Financial Obligations Due To ‘Assessment on Three Great Revolutions’

Debt from ‘Assessment on Three Great Revolutions’ Repaid With Farmers’ Harvest Allotment in *Jangyeon* County

[Food] City of *Wonsan* Provides a Ration of Whole-Corn for a Day Worth of Food in November

[Economy]

Workers’ Wages Used to Fund Reconstruction of the *Pyongyang* Make-up Factory

Saebyeul County Sesame Seed Exports to China Suffer Blow

[Politics]

Confiscation of Unregistered Personal Computers in Major Cities

North Korea Stages Public Execution of Five Former Discharged Soldiers for Robberies

Calls to Punish Officials Implicated in the Housing Unit Scandal at the National City Council Meeting

Kangsoh County Prosecuted 6 Professionally Tobacco Producing Household

[Society]

220 Soldiers from the Regiment of Artillery Rocket in *Seoheung* County, Failed to Attend Training Due To Malnutrition

National Border Area, Those in Debt Are Under Intensive Observation

A Family Tragedy Occurs as a Consequence of the Food Shortage

[Women/Children/Education]

Schools in *Kangsu* County Experience a Decrease in Attendance

[Accidents]

30 Horses Died of Infection at Military Horses Training Camp

The Air force of *Taetan* County, Carelessness of Using Benzene Caused to Fire

[Commentary]

Must Not Add Pain to People No Matter How Important ‘Assessment on Three Great Revolutions’ Are!

[Hot Topics]

“Competition For the Three Great Revolutions: Culpable For Illegal Activities”

Every Farm, Factory, and Enterprise throughout the nation poured their foremost efforts into the ‘Assessment Project on the Three Great Revolution Red Flag Attainment Movement’ (AKA ‘Assessment on Three Great Revolutions’) through the end of last year. Leading officials in charge of those units that could not meet the standard were severely criticized. It was because the ‘Assessment on Three Great Revolutions’ had the standard set so high. In case of a farm village, each farm should designate a team of workers to renovate a stable, thresh shed, and a propaganda room, and build even a kindergarten building. All of these cost a large sum of money, ranging from at least several million to tens of million NK Won*, which is too much for a farm to afford.

A leader in *Sariwon*, North *Hwanghae* Province said, ‘Assessment on Three Great Revolutions’ itself promotes illegal activities. No organization including farms, factories and enterprises has financial resources. Therefore, accommodating ‘Assessment on Three Great Revolutions’ results in collecting money from the farmers and workers. However, that does not solve all the financial problems. Aside from resentments of farmers and workers, there is a limit to the amount they can contribute even if they are willing. Consequently, what is there for the organizations left to do? Farms dispose of grain and factories get involved in illegal deals with raw materials for production in order to secure necessary funds to accommodate the Assessment on Three Great Revolution. An organization might be able to do a good job on the Assessment on Three Great Revolution. Later, however, its leaders might be found guilty of illegal activities committed for the sake of the Assessment on Three Great Revolution, which has been true in numerous cases. Workers are placed between a rock and a hard place in many instances, so to speak. They are criticized if they do not do a good job on the Assessment on Three Great Revolution. They are punished when found guilty of illegal activities even in case they had done a good job. Of course, it is not an option for the organization to choose to do nothing on the Assessment on Three Great Revolution. *Cho Dong-gook* (48), *Haeju*, South *Hwanghae* Province, asks “There is no investment from the

state and all the financial obligations fall upon the farms. Isn't it then the state that promotes illegal activities?"

* US\$1.00 is approximately 3,400 NK Won.

Food Processing Factory, *Seoheung* County, Quarrels With Workers on Financial Obligations Due To 'Assessment on Three Great Revolutions'

Food Processing Factory, *Namhan-ri* of *Seoheung* County, North *Hwanghae* Province collected 150,000 NK Won from each section to accommodate the 'Assessment on Three Great Revolutions'. This caused a lot of friction between the factory management and its workers. The factory management needed the money for purchasing materials for painting and other repair works in improving the environments. *Kim Hak-soon* (51), a worker, bitterly complained, "Workers do not have any money to spare. They cannot afford food because the factory has neither paid any wages nor provided any rations of grain. Collecting money is just too much." He continued, "There has been a fierce quarrel between the factory management and workers."

Debt from 'Assessment on Three Great Revolutions' Repaid With Farmers' Harvest Allotment in *Jangyeon* County

Cooperative Farm of *Noolsan-ri*, *Jangyeon* County, South *Hwanghae* Province started all over the renovations done for 'Assessment on Three Great Revolutions' last spring because they were destroyed by the disastrous flood in 2007. They borrowed money for this work from private money lenders. They could ill afford the loan to the extent that the county had deaths due to starvation last spring. Condition on the loan was that it was to be paid back with grain at the next fall's harvest. A total sum of 4.2 million NK Won was spent on the repair project of thresh shed, propaganda room, stable and news bulletin board. At the time of the last fall's harvest, provisions for the military had to be taken out first. What was left was not enough to repay the debt. Consequently, 3 kg of grain from each farmer's allotment was taken out, which caused a great deal of complaints on the part of farmers.

[Food] City of *Wonsan* Provides a Ration of Whole-Corn for a Day Worth of Food in November

City of *Wonsan* has provided no ration of food since last November when a ration of whole-corn for a day worth of food was provided. There are very few functioning factories and enterprises, which result in very few workers to receive rations. In December, The only ones to receive rations were war veterans, decorated soldiers and war bereaved families.

[Economy]

Workers' Wages Used to Fund Reconstruction of the *Pyongyang* Make-up Factory

As a part of the *Pyongyang* make-up factory's reconstruction plan, the interior work of the factory has begun this January after the exterior work was completed last October. Due to a lack of raw materials, the factory has been manufacturing soaps, toothpastes, and toothbrushes to cover the reconstruction cost. Around 85 million NK Won has been spent for

the reconstruction so far. With no investment from the central government, the factory, unavoidably, dispatched its workers to other factories to raise the reconstruction money. The factory sent its workers to companies or foreign trade agencies where labor was needed. The money the workers made all went towards the reconstruction fund. As a result, the workers are having difficulty in maintaining their lives because their work is not compensated.

***Saebiyul* County Sesame Seed Exports to China Suffer Blow**

Since the autumn of last year, sesame seed exports have entered into a crisis. In particular, the farmers in *Saebiyul* County, North Hamgyong Province, who heavily depended on exports to China, were greatly impacted when China stopped importing sesame seeds. Subsequently, the market price of sesame seeds fell per kg to 1,300 NK Won from 2,000 NK Won. As a result, all farmers that have been growing sesame seeds are now facing difficult times.

[Politics]

Confiscation of Unregistered Personal Computers in Major Cities

In the major cities of North Korea, unregistered recording devices and computers are being widely confiscated. At the end of the investigation of unregistered recording devices and computers, on December 22, 2008 a town meeting was held in *Pyongsung* City, South *Pyongan* Province. The chief of the Public Relations department called forward and criticized the individuals implicated as perpetrators in these investigations. In *Pyongsung*, around twenty unregistered computers were collected of which some ten were redistributed to factories or public enterprises while the other half were returned to their owners for a fine. The computers were confiscated or fined based on the amount of prohibited data, mostly computer games, it contained. In *Chungjin* City of the North *Hamgyong* Province, thirty computers were collected and a few individuals even tried using bribery of 200,000 NK Won to have their computers returned to them.

North Korea Stages Public Execution of Five Former Discharged Soldiers for Robberies

On December 21, the robbers who had frequently appeared along the route between *Chilbong-ri* in *Wonsan* City, *Kangwon* Province and *Sariwon* in North *Hwanghae* Province were finally caught. The five robbers dressed in military uniform robbed pedestrians and vehicles and even committed murder if their victims resisted. There were also several reported incidents of the perpetrators boarding buses with murder weapons and robbing the passengers for their expensive belongings. The total sum of the losses reported to the police by the passengers exceeds 20,000,000 NK won. In one instance, the robbers boarded a servi-car (private bus) and after robbing and even killing the driver and all of the passengers on board, they pushed the car down a hill. Growing popular unrest followed these life-threatening incidents, yet the state party had numerous failed to capture the perpetrators. Then on November 20 at around 3 o'clock in the afternoon, the robbers who had been in the middle of robbing passengers of a servi-car were arrested by troops patrolling the area at that time.

Investigations revealed that the robbers were ex-soldiers discharged in September of 2007. They were dissatisfied with their post-military workplaces and their earnings, which they consistently complained about when they met together. Then during the famine last spring, they and their families suffered through starvation, and the sister of one of the robbers even died of malnutrition a few days after giving birth to a baby. They began to say that they would “rather live by stealing from others than die like this,” and started seriously planning the robberies. Since then, there have been over 200 reported robberies, 4 murders, as well as over 200 assaults. Over 30,000,000 NK Won worth of goods and 80,000,000 NK Won in cash were discovered in their homes.

On December 21, the Safety Bureau of *Wonsan* city publicly executed 4 of the robbers and sentenced the fifth to 12 years in the Re-education Center. Due to the severity of their crimes, the executions were undertaken relatively quickly within 40 days of their arrest.

Calls to Punish Officials Implicated in the Housing Unit Scandal at the National City Council Meeting

At the National City Council’s Meeting held last year, major cities suggested penal policies for addressing the violations of the officials implicated in the Housing Unit Scandal. On December 14, a conference was held in *Hyesan* City, *Rygang* Province under the direction of the Secretary of Province to discuss appropriate punishment for the officials involved in the scandal. Party officials called for the impeachment of the 54 who were indicted for living in new or luxurious homes. They also stated that the current single-family residences of these officials would be reallocated to persons of merit and retired soldiers and 3-4 generations of their families according to merit. On the same day, *Hoeryong* City, North *Hamgyong* Province held a meeting and publicly criticized the officials who built their homes using government resources. The Secretary of City reported these officials to the Organization and Guidance Department to be discharged from their positions. The officials who lost their homes were transferred to the newly developed coalmine or a farmland in *Hoeryong* City.

In *Pyongsung* City, South *Pyongan* Province, the single-family residences were confiscated without any compensation to the owners. They impeached 21 out of 39 officials indicted in the Housing Unit Inspection and the others were punished according to the laws upheld by their respective parties. The confiscated residences of the officials will be reallocated to war bereaved families, war veterans, senior veterans, and retired military officials.

***Kangsuh* County Prosecuted 6 Professionally Tobacco Producing Household**

Last December 26, *Kangsuh* County, South *Pyongan* Province prosecuted 6 households who were professionally producing tobacco. *Kangsuh* County’s Safety Bureau discovered that 6 households were producing and selling tobacco as “cat tobacco*” made of leaf tobacco during their Residential Food Condition Research. They were immediately reported to the Party, and housing investigation was conducted on the same day. The Safety Bureau suspended all tobacco production and confiscated all related resources and materials. Two trucks were needed to remove all resources and materials. Confiscated materials worth a total of 56,000,000 NK Won* were sent to the storage facility in the county’s commercial management center (군상업관리소). The residents involved in the case had a primary

hearing on December 30. Some family members were hospitalized and others committed suicide. "How can we survive? Give us at least the governmental cost," cried prosecuted residents but the Party replied, "You should thank us for not imprisoning you to the discipline center. We cannot pay you for illegal goods."

*cat tobacco(고양이담배): Official name is the 'Craven A' which has the cat logo on the case, and British company sub-contracted North Korea to produce and export to Africa.

[Society]

220 Soldiers from the Regiment of Artillery Rocket in *Seoheung* County, Failed to Attend Training Due To Malnutrition

The Regiment of Artillery Rocket in *Seoheung* County, North *Hwanghae* Province, has provided two meals of potato and corn porridge per day from March to August last year, due to food shortages. There are three battalions under the Regiment of Artillery Rocket. Two hundred twenty soldiers of three battalions could not participate in military training because of malnutrition. As the food shortage got worse, the military ordered the wives and children of high-ranking officials who have been married less than 2 years to go to their wives' parents homes. They were supposed to come back to the military before military training began in November, However only a few of the wives and children returned by December.

Even if the wives would like to stay with their husbands, they cannot because they have nothing to eat. High-ranking officials are also hardly able to concentrate on their work because they are not sure how long they have to live apart from their families. The soldiers are suffering from malnutrition, and high-ranking officials are separated from their families, causing a loss of enthusiasm. Although commanding officers of the regiments, training staff, and commanding officers have criticized and tried to encourage them at the training meeting, it has not motivated them enough to focus on their training and work.

National Border Area, Those in Debt Are Under Intensive Observation

National Border Area police departments have selected targets for intensive observation. First are the households that have been under observation for a long time. Second are those who have jobs and their income is unknown, but appear to be doing well. Third are those in a lot of debt. Three categories of household are under the intensive observation. One official said, "those people would likely work for the enemy when things get worse. That's the reason these 3 groups have been put in intensive observation."

A Family Tragedy Occurs as a Consequence of the Food Shortage

On December 26, 2008, a father in his 60s who suffered from abdominal dropsy killed his 18-year-old youngest daughter in *Onsung* town, *Onsung* County, North *Hamgyong* Province. He had the liver disease a long time. Meanwhile his wife has been maintaining the family and ensuring an income. However, she, who previously cared for her sick husband and endured the food shortage, died last September from malnutrition. Since she had to take care of her husband, she did not receive any treatment or take any medicine. When the eldest daughter who was 22 years old was discharged from military service due to malnutrition

illness, she found that her mother had already passed away, and there was nothing to eat. Even though physically she was not in good condition, she began to work doing any possible odd jobs from house to house in order to feed her father lying sick in bed, and her indiscreet and imprudent sister. However, she could barely feed her family, so she finally began to prostitute herself. When the younger sister learned that her elder sister had sold her body to feed herself and father, she cried whenever everytime she saw her.

Whenever the eldest daughter left her home, she would return several days later, bringing money and corn. She would then leave again. Because the youngest daughter thought the cause of these problems was her father, she began to curse and beat him despite the fact that he could barely move by himself. The day before the incident, when the eldest sister visited home and the younger sister painfully cried, the younger daughter became angry, and severely cursed her father. The next morning when she saw her father eating his breakfast, almost unconscious, she cried, and beat him with her belt saying, “You killed my mother and you destroyed my sister, too. Why the hell do you want to live more?” The father who had endured her beating and cold treatment many times lost his temper on the day and threw a pestle of a mortar at his daughter. She was struck on the head, and died instantly. Due to the shock of her death, he put her dead body in a drum and hid it in the back of his storage room. On New Year’s Day when the eldest daughter came back home to feed her family, she could not find her sister for several days and reported it to the police station. Police officers who came to the house to get information found some suspicious things from the father and inspected him. He confessed to the crime. The dead body was found and the father was arrested. When his neighbors heard the exact story, they felt sorry and said, “We don’t know who to console more because the beaten, dead girl is poor. The father beaten by his daughter is poor, and the dead mother was poor. Furthermore, the eldest daughter, who sold her body to feed her father and sister, is poor. What is going on in this world?”

[Women/Children/Education]

Schools in *Kangsuh* County Experience a Decrease in Attendance

Attendance in all schools of *Kangsuh* County, South *Pyongan* Province, has decreased considerably as winter arrived in November. It is because classrooms are so cold that students do not try to attend a school. Fifty percent of students are absent per class in People’s School. The Ministry of Education of the County Party scolded homeroom teachers as attendance has decreased rapidly. Teachers were criticized so much that some handed in their resignation. On November 12th, the head of the ministry of education of county party assembled principals and teachers from a school that has had low attendance for the last two months. He suggested relieving the non-tax payments of students that increase their attendance.

[Accidents]

30 Horses Died of Infection at Military Horses Training Camp

On the afternoon of December 23rd the past year, horses started to die, suffering from epidemic at Military horses training camp in *Upa* District (어파구) of *Pyongwon* County, South *Pyongan* Province. Vets were inquired but the treatment was unsuccessful and 30 horses died. Vets said that they were in a state where only a certain medicine was left and

therefore they could not do anything. The only thing that they could do was treat the already dying horses with a disinfectant. They are still unable to discover the cause of the horses' deaths yet the number of deaths is growing bigger.

The Air force of Taetan County, Carelessness of Using Benzene Caused to Fire

Last January 2nd, a fire broke out in a security guard unit (*Gooboondae*)* at the Air Command fighter-bomber airfield in Taetan County, South Hwanghae Province. Soldiers who were painting the company-education room used benzene with inflammable dye. However, they misused it and a fire broke out killing two soldiers. A substantial part of the education room was burnt. Objects such as an oil painting hanging in the room, books, a television set, and a recorder were burned and were incurred as property damage.

*Gooboondae (구분대) is a military unit and its size is less than battalion.

[Commentary] Must Not Add Pain to People No Matter How Important 'Assessment on Three Great Revolutions' Are!

“‘The Thee Great Revolution Red Flag Attainment Movement’ is giving rise to unlawful activities!” These are the words of an official in Sariwon city which precisely describes the contradiction involved in the Three Great Revolution Red Flag Attainment Movement. North Korean authorities need to pay attention to both tangible and intangible types of difficulties the Thee Great Revolution movement imposes on people.

After the *Chollima* movement in the 1960s, the Thee Great Revolution Red Flag Attainment Movement was known to be a public mobilization campaign that started in 1975. The movement proclaimed ideological, technological, and cultural revolution as a means to achieve social integration through the *Juche* ideology. The ‘ideological revolution’ educates people to be loyal to the Party and the beloved leader. The ‘technological revolution’ attempts scientific and technological development through mechanization and automation in the economic sector. Lastly the ‘cultural revolution’ implements the communist production culture and communist life culture. North Korean authorities have been promoting the social campaign by forming the ‘Thee Great Revolutions Team’ as the front-line leadership group and dispatched them to each production and administrative unit. By giving awards to each unit a big performance was achieved.

The problem now is that officials are busy with outcomes that are outwardly visible because the movement is perceived as a measure of loyalty to the Party. Each unit engages in a desperate competition to receive good evaluation from the ‘Red Flag Award Committee.’ Among others areas, the cultural revolution is the field where the most amount of burden is being placed on the employees in the factories and enterprises as well as the farmers to secure resources for building maintenance businesses and interior decorations.

A farm in Jangyeon County, South Hwanghae Province alone has spent 4.2 million NK Won to decorate its interior and some workplaces have spent well over 10 million NK Won. A police station in Saepo County of the Kangwon Province, soliciting money from rich people was not enough and so donations were collected from people coming to the police station and passerbys. Therefore, people tried to avoid the areas where they were asking for donations.

Each work unit collected 150,000 NK Won at the food factory in *Seoheung* County, North *Hwanghae* Province. Those at the farm in *Jangyeon* County repaid the debt incurred by the Thee Great Revolution Movement by setting aside 3kg out of the ration for the farmers. People's view on the Three Great Revolutions Movement is not positive since they have started to collect money that is not obligated from people who can barely survive with porridge and water to save 1,000-2,000 NK Won that can buy 1kg of corn. Along with taking away portions of rations without prior consent from the citizens, officials criticized those who expressed objection for lack of loyalty.

The officials suffered as well because they collected money forcefully in spite of strong opposition from residents. However, officials often ended up committing unlawful or illegal transactions because they did not have sufficient resources to meet the minimum. Even after receiving a good business evaluation, sometimes officials became subject to punishment. For this reason, this practice is considered not useful in raising the morale of officials. Although the movement started with good intentions, it should be improved or abolished if it is currently unable to create an effect. It is also inflicting pain on people's lives and contributing to the disruption of the public order. We hope that the Three Great Revolutions Red Flag movement will become a movement that improves the welfare of the residents.



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Good Friends– An International NGO for Peace, Human Rights and Refugees

Good Friends provides relief works for international refugees to become all lives' friend, peace movement to fundamentally resolve disputes and conflicts that human beings face, and human rights movement to protect human rights

Good Friends has been providing information on food shortages in North Korea, raising funds for humanitarian assistance, dispatching activists to national border areas between China and DPRK and having them investigate local situations, and publishing reports on food shortages in North Korea.

Now Good Friends USA intends to improve humanitarian and human rights situation of North Korean residents and to inform this situation to the international community by

- 1) collecting information on severe food shortages and bad situations in health, education, and transportation and providing them to other humanitarian aids organizations so that they can support North Korean people effectively.
- 2) investigating current situations of North Korean refugees in China, and providing protections and aids for them.
- 3) assessing human rights violations occurring in North Korea, informing them to the international societies, and requesting the North Korean government for improvement on human rights and living conditions.

Also, Good Friends USA publishes the newsletter [North Korea Today \(English edition\)](#) to inform the international public.

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