



GOODFRIENDS



Weekly Newsletter

No.281 June 2009

["Good Friends" desires to help the North Korean people through humanistic point of view, and publishes "North Korea Today" describing the way the North Korean people live as real as possible. We at Good Friends also hope to be a bridge between the North Korean people and the world.]

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[Hot Topics]

**Provincial Party of North *Hamgyong* Province Announces, "Let Every Organization Compete with Each Other"**

The Provincial Party of North *Hamgyong* Province held another plenary meeting regarding the 150-day battle on May 13 after a similar meeting on May 7. The meeting concluded with a decision "to let every organization compete with each other in order to accomplish a good harvest this year." The idea is to enhance competitiveness by sorting out units with good production results from ones with poor results. It is expected that more thorough reviews of various indices will be conducted. Such indices refer to a wide variety of items in the area of agriculture, including the current amount of fertilizer available, status of human resources, readiness of agricultural equipment, and detailed daily plans. Party workers and administrators who have been dispatched to the fields are supposed to file detailed reports on the unit's planning and accomplishments. A city party leader who attended the meeting said that the decision was intended to increase the level of production by letting organizations compete with each other.

**City of *Hoeryong* Suffers From High Absenteeism Even During 150-Day Battle**

The City of *Hoeryong* in North *Hamgyong* Province is on the alert because of high absenteeism even during the 150-day battle period. In the cases of the two attack units, 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> battalions, each company has barely twenty people reporting to work. Each battalion, made up of 150 to 180 people, consists of three companies that are each split into three platoons. Therefore, each platoon has 15 to 20 people. The fact that each company has barely twenty people reporting to work means that there is only one platoon, not three in a company. Accordingly, on May 14, city chairmen of the Construction

Department and Transportation Department gathered party members and again explained the content of a secret letter. The intention was to make the party aware of the importance and seriousness of the 150-day battle and to overcome any difficulties with the power of ideology. However, things are not that simple if one reviews the situation of subordinate attack unit members. Those who do not report to work have almost run out of food. Rations handed out by the city did were not sufficient for even a few days. Laborers say, "That amount of rations can last a family only two days." After learning the reality of the situation, even the command center of the Construction Department could not force the laborers to report to work. All they could do was explain again the importance of the 150-day battle through party workers. Laborers say with anger, "the 150-day battle is not a gate to opening a Strong and Prosperous Nation, but a gate to be closed so that a Strong and Prosperous Nation may pass. The 150-day battle is a battle leading laborers to agony and death." In the meantime, other areas are also suffering from high absenteeism. The Mining Machinery Factory of the *Ranam* District in the City of *Chungjin* makes laborers report to work by force. Laborers at the Processing Unit and Coal Moving Unit have been forced to report to work and they are being pressed to complete the unfinished tasks assigned last month.

### **Maintain Good Citizenship at Home During 150-Day Battle Period**

During the period of this 150-day battle, residents are being reviewed in their private lives as well as in their workplace. A party leader of the City of *Pyongsung*, South *Pyongan* Province said, "the 150-day battle is a battle with which people vowed to our Dear Leader to expedite opening a Strong and Prosperous Nation. Therefore each resident is to go through a self-examination during this period." Each Neighborhood Unit of the districts of *Pyongsung* will visit each household and see how our Leader's portraits are being cared for. At the markets, inspections will be conducted to discover all of the contraband items for sale. Even a pack of cigarettes or market shelves for used clothing will be confiscated. Many female peddlers are found struggling to avoid police inspectors. They repeatedly display contraband items on the ground and hide them from the police inspectors. People's Assembly supervisors are busy delivering various instructions to individual households, such as "raise the height of the fence, beautify and repair roof and paint them with lime, and clean up the drainage, etc." Anyone not complying with the instructions is threatened with words such as, "You do not deserve to live in the city and you will be expelled to the countryside." *Chung Hyangok* (50s) complains with a sigh, "Will the day come when I do not have to worry about all this nonsense?"

### **[Food]**

#### ***Kosan* County Collective Farm, 2<sup>nd</sup> Distribution Recipients Collects Two Months Worth Food Reduction**

Although time has passed, there are many complaints regarding distributions at *Jookgun* collective Farm in *Kosan* County, *Kangwon* Province. Last year's total production at this farm was about 1,700 tons of corn, rice and other crops. Approximately 800 tons were taken by the 5<sup>th</sup> Corps 5<sup>th</sup> Division in the rear and another 500 tons were deducted for non-tax contributions that all farmers are responsible for. The remaining 400 tons were farmers'

share. For a family where both parents are farming and have two children received 620kg. There were complaints that this was a small ration, however this is considered a lucky case. There are 9 agricultural units and 1 mechanical unit and the 2<sup>nd</sup> distribution recipients, work units 6 through 9, received 2 months worth food reductions. On the other hand, the farm managing workers did not deduct any social taxes and received full distribution, which led to farmer's unspoken resentment. As of mid May, there are many families not coming to their workplaces due to shortage of food even though the 150 Days Combat is in progress. It is essential to have full mobilization to obtain a successful result at the 150-Days Battle. So, the farm officials are investigating starving households and providing 5kg of grain to these families.

### ***Pyongyang Ryongsung District Suspended Distribution until September***

*Ryongsung District, Pyongyang City* suspended all distributions starting from May through September. They provided 5kg of corn per person up until April but they are now ordered to be self-sufficient. The party is holding several lectures repeatedly announcing that there will be better condition for farming within 3-4 years as they make their way to being a Strong and Prosperous Nation. With this reasoning, the party ordered, "Enhancing agricultural production levels by mobilizing all parties, all workers and all troops". The residents are frustrated with a rumor that there might be new 100-Day Battle starting followed by the 150-Days Battle.

### **[Economy]**

#### ***Rochang-ri Farm in Chungjin Worried as 60% of Rice Seedlings Wither***

*Rochang-ri Farm in Chungam area, Chungjin City, North Hamgyong Province*, is worried because the transplanting of the rice seedlings began about two days ago, but the rice seedlings are already dying. The members of the farm cannot find out the reason and wonders whether the ratio of the agrichemicals were wrong.

#### ***Only the Managers are Using the Computers in Heungnam Fertilizer Factory***

The *Heungnam Fertilizer Factory* in South *Hamgyong Province* received 20 computers this year to boost up the production of chemical fertilizer through the supply of scientific technology. The Central Party instructed the workers of the *Heungnam Fertilizer Factory* to increase the production of fertilizer and subsidized them to elevate their level of functioning. On last April 3<sup>rd</sup>, the computers were placed in the scientific technology supply room; however, only a few people are allowed to use them. Only the officials of the factory or the workers of the Primary Party can use the computer. The laborers know that the computers are in the scientific technology supply room, but they cannot use them. If the laborers enter the room by chance, they are usually yelled at for being there without working and are thrown out of the room. *Changseok Chung* (pseudonym, 30s), who is a laborer of the factory, cannot understand this and says, "Why do they use the computer by themselves when the Great General provided it so that we may produce more fertilizers? The officials cannot increase the production by using the computer in the office. The laborers are the ones who need the technology information, but they are not allowing the

laborers to even touch the computer. How can they do that?" By the way, it was reported that the amount of production for the past first quarter was 70% of the target figure, and the amount of production increased up to 85% during the second quarter.

### [Politics]

#### **Officials in North *Hamgyong* Province Held an Emergency Conference Call**

On the afternoon of May 18<sup>th</sup>, city and county officials from across *North Hamgyong* Province gathered in their respective party meeting rooms to participate in an emergency conference call. Workers from each region gathered and listened to an address delivered on the call by the leading secretary of the Provincial Party. The primary message conveyed on the call was the need for workers to take initiative in the 150-Day Battle, that the success of farming efforts was particularly vital in face of the looming food crisis, and that the potential for North Korea to become a Strong and Prosperous Nation depended on their efforts. An electrical shortage in *Hoeryung City* caused the local phone to disconnect during the call, but aside from this incident, the Provincial Party Secretary's address went smoothly.

#### **The Bureau 27 *North Hamgyong* Inspections Suddenly Cease**

On May 17<sup>th</sup>, Bureau 27 inspectors suddenly ended their inspections and withdrew from *North Hamgyong* Province. Local residents were quite curious about the cause of this sudden withdrawal, and later learned that the inspections had been terminated because they were seen to be interfering with the 150-Day Battle. While the 150-Day Battle was ongoing, the inspectors went to every home to confiscate all TVs and VCRs. These actions lead to deep resentment and numerous complaints from residents. Often, after their property was seized, workers would skip work and try to find ways to get their possessions back. After having to face many crying housewives who pleaded to be given back the precious things that had been taken from them, the County Party recommended to the Central Party that "It is not wise to add stress to the lives of residents who are in the middle of a battle. Furthermore, their productivity has been plummeting." Eventually, the Central Party recalled the inspectors.

#### **Security agents are in trouble with Bureau 27**

Before the Bureau 27 inspectors left *North Hamgyong* Province, they inflicted a great deal of suffering on the local population. Inspectors would enter houses uninvited, and if they found a TV without a preset tuner, they would confiscate the device without allowing the owners to explain themselves. If the inspectors had acted in a fair manner, there would have been far fewer objections. Those with money were able to quickly regain their possessions, but those without had to struggle to come up with enough money for the necessary bribe. Residents were expected to come up with at least a few boxes of Chinese Cigarettes within days of the confiscation, or they could expect to never see their possessions again. On May 10<sup>th</sup>, ten families in *Onsung* had their televisions confiscated on the same day. Even those residents who were not accused of any wrongdoing, like watching illegal programs, still had their televisions taken away. This caused a lot of anger

amongst residents. *Ko Jung-woon* (40's) described the mood – “They took away my TV because it was not tuned correctly. Everyone says they are unfairly taking advantage of the people. “ *Kim Jung-Hyun* (pseudonym, 40's) lamented: “If this was happening anywhere else in the world, there would be riots, but our people are going around begging for cigarettes so they can pay a bribe. What kind of country is this? Our people are far too meek.” Bureau 27 agents also discovered that many police officers had South Korean movies on their computers. These officers are currently awaiting prosecution.

### [Society]

#### **The People's Army Joint Staff Section Issues an Order, “Help the Agricultural Community”**

The People's Army Joint Staff Section issued an order of assisting agricultural production to North and South *Hwanghae* Province, North and South *Pyongan* Province, and *Kangwon* province through the phone and teletype. The main message was, “It's time to help out the agricultural community. We must show the leadership of our military-first politics. The citizens are preparing for the 150-day Battle so the military must get involved as well, and help with all their effort.” Following this statement, each military unit has been helping out in the fields especially the 5<sup>th</sup> Corps, 5<sup>th</sup> Division, 10<sup>th</sup> regiment in the *Kangwon* province of the infantry battalion. They have been carrying around portable outdoor tents to support the agricultural community.

#### ***Nampo* College Students Tour Supporting the 150-Day Battle**

Students majoring in dance and music in *Nampo* City of South *Pyongan* Province have been going on tour in order to show support for the 150-Day Battle. They have been traveling to rural parts of the country such as *Ryong Kang*, *Kang Suh*, and *Kang Dong* counties and more, to help out workers in the fields. Many areas are welcoming the performances, but some are giving them a cold reception. Currently, at a collective farm there is 82mm trench mortar battalion of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Division deployed to support the rural community. These people are not happy with the *Nampo* college students' performance. They are saying, “Don't support us through singing but by giving us food.” After announcing their opinion the performance was cancelled. As this problem reached the superior officials, two of the battalion's political workers were discharged from the military and three political instructors were punished. The supreme commander of the North Korean People's Army said, “How can they dare to disgrace the military through food,” and warned others from repeating this mistake in the future.

#### **An Old Person Addressed as A Big Landowner Passed away When His Land Was Forfeited**

*Gil Deok-chang* (62) at the 2<sup>nd</sup> unit, *Ryongnam-ri*, *Saebiyul* County in North *Hamgyong* Province has been addressed as a large landowner because he used to cultivate crops on large amounts of forest for private farm field. Mr. *Gil* lived in *Pyongyang* until he was 32 years old, but he was expelled from his hometown to *Saebiyul* County because he was a son of a rich farmer. He received a senior pension. He worked as a forest ranger under a forest

supervisor and grew crops personally. At first he cultivated corn on 1,000 *pyongs*<sup>1</sup> and he enlarged the cultivating dimension into 5 *Jungbos*<sup>2</sup> in 2008. In order to farm on the property, he hired people by paying them 5kgs of corn a day. He usually harvested 18 tons of corn a year and therefore his neighbors called him a big landowner. However, when the Forest Utilization Unit was dissolved this year, he lost his land and complained to the head of the Department of Industrial Wood in the Department of Land Management and his staff about their decision. While he was arguing with them about this issue, he died due to a heart attack. Only a few people mourned over his death because they thought he was just an awful old hog and died. Only his workers who fed their families and themselves by working for his farm felt sorry and mourned over his death.

### [Women/Children/Education]

#### **Democratic Women's Union Insists, "Take Care of Women Who Have Delivered Three Children"**

The Democratic Women's Union (DWU) of *Sinuiju* in North *Pyongan* Province held a lecture themed, "Women should bear many children--we should take care of women, who have three children." Although this lecture began with a keynote speech to inspire hard work during the 150-Day Battle for work, the lecture segued into this issue because of the growing number of women disinclined to having children posing a threat to the future workforce. As an incentive for women to bear more children, at the schools, families with three or more children can be lifted from non-tax contribution burdens. A member of DWU said, "It is hard to feed children when we can barely feed ourselves." Additionally, the schools demand enormous contributions from the parents, making it difficult to even educate the children. Consequently, many have grown to believe that it is better not to have any children if they will not be able to provide for them properly through nourishment and education. As a direct consequence of this growing trend of young people avoiding child birth, the government seemed to have stepped in with policies geared towards assisting women to alleviate the gradually declining birth rate in the country as a whole.

### [Accidents]

#### **Bean Curd (Tofu) Seller Attempts Suicide After Being Abused by Police**

*Heo Jeong-hee* (alias, 30s), who lives in *Bokchun-dong, Danchun City, South Hamgyong* Province, attempted suicide on May 14. She had lost her husband a few years ago and has lived a difficult life trying to support her mother and her two daughters. *Heo* made and sold bean curd at the market where she sold 50 squares of bean curd a day. She worked without sleeping to make ends meet. A few days before the incident, a new policy was installed for the removal of food stands. One officer had come to enforce this new law, and proceeded with insults and harassment. The police officer claimed that she was too young to be selling bean curd at the market and swore at her while even throwing out the bowl containing the bean curd. *Heo* screamed out, "Then, how do you

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<sup>1</sup> unit of land; 1 *pyong* is 3.954 sq. yds

<sup>2</sup> unit of land, 1 *Jungbo* is 2.45acres, and 3,000 *Pyongs*

expect me to live?” This outburst won her trip to the police station where she received the “Reactionary Elements” stamp. A close friend and neighbor said that she could only imagine what could have happened to her at the police station. When she saw her again after four days in jail, Heo seemed to be in a state of shock; her eyes were glazy for three days. “I didn’t dare to ask her about what had happened in the jail, but I sensed that she had suffered horribly.” Heo drank salt water to end her life, but barely survived and just cried, unable to say anything. Her neighbors tried to console her and advised her to live with strong will to survive leaving the bad memories behind, telling her that “she must live and be strong for her elderly mother and children.”

### [Commentary]

#### **Even a Remote Possibility of War Should Not Be Tolerated**

North Korea conducted a nuclear test on May 25. This was the second test since 2006. It took place when South Korea was in shock from the tragic death of the former President *Roh Moo-hyun*. On May 27, the South Korean government announced its full participation in the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI). A North Korean military spokesman at *Panmunjom* immediately released a statement in response, declaring that “even a small hostile military action toward us will be answered with a powerful military attack.” The Peaceful Reunification of the Fatherland Committee declared in a statement, “We will respond with real military measures suitable in a period of war.” In response to these threats, South Korea’s Joint Chiefs of Staff declared that they will resolutely respond to North Korea’s provocations. The ROK-US Combined Forces Command upgraded the Watch Condition, which takes into account surveillance information gathered from North Korea, to Step 2 (serious risk) from Step 3. At the moment, dark clouds of war are forming over the Korean peninsula. The current political crisis in the Korean peninsula is like a car flying along with broken brakes. Will any government, either South or North, be capable of applying the brakes before anyone gets hurt? Neither government seems capable of doing so. We are disappointed and worried about the attitudes of both governments. Governmental authorities on both sides point fingers at the other side for shirking responsibilities and raise their voices, “We will not hesitate to go to war if provoked.” Both sides emphasize “national security,” but they never seem to be agonized or show interest in safeguarding the lives and welfare of their own people.

Peoples’ lives are not to be protected and saved simply by a swift and complete domination over your enemy. Peoples’ lives are to be protected and saved through maintaining and managing peace. This can be accomplished only by withholding any provocative and hostile words, maintaining friendly relations and a non-combative posture until complete peace takes root. In other words, neither side should give any excuse to the other side to be provocative, not even the slightest excuse. This is the primary capability and the highest virtue on the part of politicians.

Residents of both Koreas are suffering from economic hardships on an unprecedented scale. Consequently, more than at any other time, suffering people need a sense of hopefulness. It is the task of politicians to be comforting and compassionate toward

suffering people. Unfortunately both authorities seem to be failing to communicate with their own people. In some respects, they seem to be neglecting communication or not even trying to begin the process. In North Korea, maintenance of the current political power structure seems to have preceded the security of people's livelihood. North Korean authorities do not seem to care how much suffering residents are going through during the current 150-day battle. Residents are mobilized by force, worse than during any other battle in the past.

It would be hard to tell how much longer the residents, suffering from hunger, will remain "good citizens." How about South Koreans? South Korean residents have realized how handicapped the Lee regime is in reading public sentiment after experiencing last year's candle light protests in Seoul plaza during the memorial period for former President *Roh Moo-hyun*. Public opinion in general seems to believe that, "it is disappointing and lamentable for the Lee regime to 'neglect decent attitudes toward a human being' aside from issues of ideology."

At the present time, the authorities of South and North Korea are far removed from "their people." It is highly questionable how smoothly governmental affairs can be managed without support from their people. Rulers of both sides should not fall into the temptation, as they have tried in the past, to turn around the unfavorable political situations by inciting outside enemies. Countless individuals should not be victims of incompetence and egotistic disputes on the part of rulers on both sides. Rulers of both sides should go through a thorough self-evaluation on the way their governmental affairs have been run. They should understand their people through communication with them and acquire their support. Based on this support, they should attempt to solve difficult problems in the international community.

For us Koreans, there still remains a painful history of war between the South and North and the agony of a divided society. These painful wounds are about to open and start a vicious cycle before they are completely healed. All Korean people believe that there should never be war again on this peninsula. They believe peace should take root as soon as possible. Governments should listen to people, more than at any other time. People urge their rulers not to commit historical sins. People urge their rulers to reach wise resolutions and reconcile with each other.



for Peace, Human Rights and Refugees



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## Please become a good friend of the Good Friends

### 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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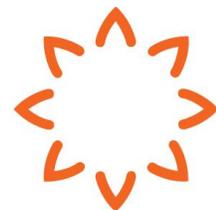
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