



GOOD FRIENDS



Weekly Newsletter

No.303 November 2009

[“Good Friends” aims to help the North Korean people from a humanistic point of view and publishes “North Korea Today” describing the way the North Korean people live as accurately as possible. We at Good Friends also hope to be a bridge between the North Korean people and the world.]

[Hot Topics]

Shady Alliance of *Hyesan City* Police with Smugglers Stirs Discontent Residents Complain, “The Behavior of Privileged Leaders is Detestable”
Manager of Sanitarium in *Kangseo County*, About To Be Fired for Planting Grain Instead of Medicinal Herbs
Gwaksan County, Party Instructs Officers to use “Foreman’s Handbook” to Improve Farming Practices

[Food]

Uncertain Food Ration Outlook for Orchard Workers at *Kwail County*
In *Jaeryong County* 1/3 of Farm Workers Survive on Porridge
Onchun City Farm, “What Happened to 10 Ton Production Base...”
Continuing Occurrence of Absents Due to Food Problem at the *Gumduk Mine*
This Year’s Crop Yield Falls Short of Last Year in *Jangyeon County*

[Economy]

“Solving Food Shortage Is the Foremost Task of the Party,” Say Officers from Central Party and Department of Agriculture
Difficult Repairs after Railroad Accident in *Danchun*
Frequent Train Troubles in *Rygang Province* Being Blamed on Repairmen
Bukchang Thermal Power Generation Plant Running into Problems

[Politics]

Crackdown on Illegal Video Films in *Pyongsung Hamheung* Created Drug Enforcement Team

[Society]

Pyongsung Police Officers Frantic to Make Money
Buses Run Again Between *Hoeryong* and *Chungjin*, but It is Still Inconvenient

[Women/Children/Education]

Expanded Study Opportunity for the Children of the Overseas Staff
Members of the Democratic Women's Union (DWC), *Heungnam* City, have
Difficulties due to Artistic Propaganda Activities
Students Dispatched to Farms Go Back Home Because it is Too Hard

[Accidents]

A Corn Thief Commits Suicide while being investigated
Heungnam Marine Product Business Office Lost 8 tons of Squid Due to Poor Storage

[Editorial]

Corrupt Officials Must be Purged

[Hot Topics]

Shady Alliance of *Hyesan* City Police with Smugglers Stirs Discontent

Police officers in the border areas are getting rich through protection rackets paid by smugglers. In the case of the officers of the *Hyesan* City Police, all the officers, with the exception of four, ride privately owned motorbikes. These motorbikes have been purchased and registered with the police station as personal property. Riding motorbikes to work is a luxury, considering that many ordinary residents have to walk to work because they cannot afford bicycles. Among those officers, *Kang Chulryong*, unit leader of Patrol Unit 4, is infamous in the neighborhood. Officer *Kang* patrols the border areas of *Hyeran Dong* and *Hyesin Dong*. He allegedly makes more than 500 Chinese yuan by ensuring safe transportation of smuggled contraband, such as copper, gold and rare tungsten alloys. He boasts of having been able to pay the high price of 6,300 yuan for his motorbike. When he goes to buy from the dealers at the black market, he considers 20,000 to 30,000 NKW to be paltry sums and asks the dealers to keep them. Residents whisper, "*Kang Chulryong* used to be so poor while living in South *Hwanghae* Province and now he looks so affluent after serving in the *Hyesan* City Patrol for less than a year."

Shady alliances with smugglers is not the only reason for *Kang's* infamy. According to *Kim Changho* (alias), it is *Kang's* 'harsh treatment of those residents whose only means of survival is smuggling.' *Kang* is hated by residents as 'the worst human being among the

police officers.' When the smuggled amount is too little for him to skim any off the top, he confiscates all of it and reports the crime, proclaiming his abilities as a crime fighter. When the smuggled amount is sizable, he takes more than half and looks the other way. *Kang Chulryong* accumulated his wealth in this manner. He spreads bribe money among high ranking police officers and provincial party leaders, and thus is able to pass through numerous official inspections. According to a resident who knows *Kang* very well, "*Kang Chulryong* only wears a policeman's uniform because of the support of his wife's family. He bribed the leaders of the city party and the provincial party with money taken from smugglers. He is driven by an ambition to rise ever higher." He is boastful that he is the best in the police force. Whenever he sees a poor policeman, he looks down upon him as an idiot. He makes fun of women and young girls then takes them to restaurants for meals. He spends money like water. Residents feel disgusted at the sight of this man, who has developed a bad reputation. Some residents say, "We wish *Kang Chulryong* was relieved of his position. Our greatest wish is to see him kicked out of the police force." Any residents who mention the unit leader of Patrol Unit 4 severely criticize the alliance of corrupted police officers and criminals. The residents claim that, "These corrupt officers cruelly kick those innocent people while they are down, people just trying their best to survive."

Residents Complain, "The Behavior of Privileged Leaders is Detestable"

The residents of *Pyongsung* City, South *Pyongan* Province, complain that party leaders live too easily. Party leaders take advantage of their positions and use them to make money. This advantage makes it much easier for them to make a living than ordinary residents. In many cases, this advantage comes from illegal activities such as bribe taking and misuse of state-owned properties. A good example would be the case of nutrition powder received from South Korea. Last July, South Korea sent nutrition powder for pregnant women; party leaders embezzled it for their own profit. Party leaders pay visits to the enterprises belonging to the food distribution network on the pretext of providing site counsels. Some party leaders quite often take products from these enterprises without compensation. In addition, party leaders are exempt from the various labor mobilizations.

The privileges of the Party stand in stark contrast to the situation that ordinary residents face daily. Ordinary residents lose so much time due to mobilizations that they suffer in their daily efforts to make a living. If party leaders ever contribute to the labor mobilizations, it is only for the least strenuous tasks, such as cleaning the streets in the morning. They just try to show off and pretend to do something useful, while avoiding many real labor mobilizations. While the residents who cannot participate in the mobilization are supposed to pay a fine, leaders never do. The resentment of residents toward party leaders keeps intensifying as the task of daily survival gets harder and harder.

Manager of Sanitarium in *Kangseo* County, About To Be Fired for Planting Grain Instead of Medicinal Herbs

The Third Sanitarium, founded in April of 1993 for the purpose of performing medical treatments with oriental medicine, has depended on growing its own herbs. But the food crisis began in July of 1995 and food rations since ceased, leading to deaths from starvation

in 1996. At the time, the sanitarium could survive through the food crisis by growing corn and soybeans on the fields set aside for medicinal herbs. As the new food crisis emerged last year, the newly appointed manager of the sanitarium decided to plant grains and vegetables wherever possible. He thought that it was the only way that employees could solve the food shortage by themselves. This year, medicinal herbs were planted only in a single *Jungbo* (2.45 acres) out of four, the rest were planted with corn and soybeans. The Sanitarium anticipates a harvest of 5 MT of corn and 800 Kg of soybeans.

At the end of the 150-Day Battle, the manager was severely criticized by his superiors at the general residents meeting. The health authorities of *Kangseo* County instructed him not to plant corn on the field reserved for medicinal herbs this year. Instructions specified that the fields should be planted only with a wide variety of medicinal herbs. His decision to plant grain was directly against the instructions of his superiors. There is a rumor going around that he will be fired soon by the county. The employees of the sanitarium, however, support the manager's decision, saying, "How many of us could have survived this year's poor harvest if the manager had just followed the instructions of the county health authorities?"

Gwaksan County, Party Instructs Officers to Use "Foreman's Handbook" to Improve Farming Practices

The County Party of Gwaksan County, North Pyongan Province instructs officers to make "Foreman's Handbook" to improve farming practices. "Foreman's Handbook", which was originated with the leading secretary of Gwaksan County, has been a great help to officers who do not know well on farming practices. Usually, the party officers only give the political guidance, but the County Party decided to give the business guidance as well, because the skills of officers' business practices is very poor. This is unprecedented. The episode that "Foreman's Handbook" was first made is as follows. Watching a County Party officer conducts a farming guidance during the 150-day battle period, the leading secretary of Gwaksan County asked, "what was the rice crop yield of the work unit that was under your guidance last year, and how much percent of the total rice crop yield plan did it correspond to?" The officer could not answer it properly, so the leading secretary reproved, saying, "How can you give a proper guidance without knowing anything about farming? As one of Party officers, you don't have a clear grasp of the practical knowledge on your job, which deteriorates the dignity of Party officers."

Last May, the leading secretary of the County Party asked questions to each party officer at a County Party Committee meeting. The questions were about whether they were aware of the soil analysis data and deployment issues in his assigned farm, as well as yearly crop yield and the current situations regarding rice planting, fertilizing, and weeding. However, no officer properly answered the questions. The leading secretary of the County Party gave a four-day farming training to the party officers to improve their practical farming knowledge.

In addition, the leading secretary of the County Party instructed officers to make "Foreman's Handbook" and to write details about the farming business practices on it.

This helped officers give detailed and effective farming practice guidance. As they could give effective farming guidance thanks to the "Foreman's Handbook" , the leading secretary of

the County Party, on June 17th, commanded all collective farm work unit foremen to write Foreman's Handbook in order for them to do farming in a more scientific way. This has contributed to reducing the instances in which party officers give guidance without actually knowing the specific farming business practices.

[Food]

Uncertain Food Ration Outlook for Orchard Workers at Kwail County

Orchard workers from *Yeonkwang-ri* in the Kwail County in the South Hwanghae province are anxious about the uncertain food ration outlook for this year. Usually food ration for the orchard workers were supplied by their own harvest of corn and rice. However, because of bad farming conditions due to heavy rain in June and drought in August, big shortage in the food distribution is expected. Many families have already run out of food since early spring. Orchard workers complain that even though they harvest fruit, it is no help to their food shortage since fruit cannot substitute a meal. The only thing they can do is store the fruit and sell it in the winter to buy food.

The *Yeonkwang-ri* orchard had severe food shortage last year as well. This orchard normally grows apples, pears, plums, strawberries and peaches. The orchard workers have also been growing some grain between the fruit trees to supplement their food supply. However, this practice was caught by the Fruit Production Administration inspectors and the managers received severe criticisms. The Fruit Production Administration prohibits growing of any grain alongside the fruit trees because the grain depletes the fruit trees of nutrients. Similarly, in *Anak* County, an orchard worker was fired and all the bean plants destroyed because he planted beans alongside the apple trees. Previously, the Agricultural Management Council allowed limited plating of beans among the apple trees because the apples trees were of a taller variety. However, the new apple trees are of a shorter variety and have not been growing well due to the side farming. Therefore, the party prohibits growing any grain alongside the fruit trees.

In Jaeryong County 1/3 of Farm Workers Survive on Porridge

At the Cooperation Farm in *Jaeryong* County in the South *Hwanghae* Province, the crop yield is not very high despite the encouragement from the managers. The farming parties followed the farming schedule for 150 days through July and things seemed to be going well. However, the farming suffered from the drought in July and August. Currently in the West Sea district, about 1/3 of the families in the villages survive on porridges. This is about 20 families out of 60 families. The workers are already worried about the food shortage in the fall. People living in towns and cities can supplement their food supply through business, but farmers are unable to do so. The farmers have no choice but to wait for the food distribution from the government. Many worry that if this does not occur, "Everyone will starve to death before they reach the goal of building a Strong and Prosperous Nation in 2012."

***Onchun* City Farm, “What Happened to 10 Ton Production Base...”**

County Assembly of *Onchun County, South Pyongan Province* gathered officers from all levels and confuted the importance of a successful harvest year on May 22 when 150-Day Battle began. They emphasized, “In order to open doors as the Strong and Prosperous Nation in the year 2012, we have to resolve the food crisis.” And yet they left it up to the residents within the county to find their own way to solve their food crisis. Starting May 2005, all enterprise workers, all members of the Democratic Women’s Union, and middle school students were all called in and mobilized to work at farms. Because they tightened inspection to make sure there are no absences, the harvest went fairly well until July. However, they estimated that hot climate change between July and August negatively impacted yields. The problem was not only the climate but that farmers failed to fully understand the new crops. The farm had their #2 working group and #4 working group grow corns as their new crop, but they failed because the residents did not understand the instructions given by the Farm Supporting Group. Because this was a brand new crop, the Farm Technique Directive Officers had some difficulties giving instructions.

With the 100-Day Battle, officers at the County Party and Agencies of the County Distribution are on the ground directing the fall harvest. *Onchun* County is worried because their harvest returns are worse than that of previous year. A farm officer commented on the seriousness of the food crisis, “Our County can produce up to 10 tons a year. This not only satisfies our own needs but we can share with other counties as well. Our County is the best known open field in *South Pyongan Province*. I don’t understand how we came to such devastating food crisis. This is the area where people can eat rice even if other areas can’t. It’s inconceivable that we have more serious food problems.

Continuing Occurrence of Absentees Due to Food Problem at the *Gumduk* Mine

Although the 100-Day Battle already begun, there are continuing absences of workers at the *Gumduk Mine* in *Danchun City, South Hamgyong Province*. The 4th Group and 5th Group of the 2nd mine was fine until June when they still received corn and rice. By July, they only received corn, and they were getting nothing by September. Only laborers (not family members) received the food for the first half of October on October 2, which was a day before Harvest Festival (추석). Because of the food situation, the number of absent workers increased even with the 100 Days Combat. Last October 7, the miner announced that they will punish all absent workers. Out of 23 absent workers, 5 are staying home from illness and remaining 17 workers needed to present their reasons for their absence and requested medical notes from their doctors. If the absent workers can’t prove their illness, they will be sent to the discipline center for twice as many days that they were absent from work.

This Year’s Crop Yield Falls Short of Last Year in *Jangyeon* County

From September 23 to 29, the Farming Management Commission in *Jangyeon* County in the *South Hwanghae* Province dispatched officers to every farm to determine the crop yield. The crop yield for corn is expected to be around 2 to 2.5 tons per *Jungbo* (a unit of land of

2.45 acres) because the farming was not very successful. Similarly, the crop yield for rice and beans is expected to fall short of last year. The price of rice in *Jangyeon* County is 200 NK won less than the Northern *Hamgyong* Province. Nevertheless, many residents are surviving on porridges due to food shortage.

[Economy]

“Solving Food Shortage Is the Foremost Task of the Party,” Say Officers from Central Party and Department of Agriculture

Set forth below is a summary of the meeting in early October among the Central Party and the Department of Agriculture officers:

“Each farming village is carrying out a harvest campaign supported by the parties, armies and people. This year, solving the food shortage crisis is of utmost urgency because people are demanding that the food shortage crisis be solved and it is the basic social issue in the construction of the Strong and Prosperous Nation by 2012. The foremost task of the party at this time is to have each city and county solve the food shortage crisis on their own. There is a global food crisis as a result of the global warming for the past several years, so foreign countries are also controlling their food supply, and the food shortage situation has been intensified. The national food shortage crisis is not just a simple economic problem, but it is becoming a political problem that has a substantial influence in maintaining our socialist regime. Nothing is more important than the food shortage crisis in our nation which is going through the drills of war as we stand opposite to the *Lee Myung-Bak* government in South Korea. The nation must be able to farm and harvest well without relying on help from and trade with foreign countries. People’s reaction and recognition toward the government will deteriorate if we demand people to carry out the policy of the party without solving the food shortage crisis.”

One officer from a regional party who heard the contents of the meeting commented that there seems to be a difference of understanding between the Central Party and the regional parties. “It is said that the foremost task of the party is to have the cities and counties solve the food shortage crisis on their own, yet they ban the small patch farming. Small patch farming is the only way for the cities and counties to solve the food shortage on their own. Yet they ban this practice while instructing people to solve the problem on their own; this is an oxymoron. The Central Party eliminates the markets and the small patch farming in an attempt to cut off the elements of capitalism, but with the only means of solving the food shortage crisis prohibited, there is no way for the cities and counties to solve the food shortage crisis on their own.”

Difficult Repairs after railroad accident in Danchun

Soon after the 100-day battle started, a railroad accident occurred. On October 11th at 2 P.M. at *Omong-ri* in *Danchun* city of South *Hamgyong* Province, a train arriving at a station suddenly derailed and overturned. The train was carrying zinc and electric light anthracite. The accident resulted in six cars turning over, four people killed, and all traffic between south and north of *Omong-ri* grounding to a halt for 24 hours. The central workers

instructed, "The railways need to be repaired technically well", but it could not be fixed in a timely matter due to the lack of wood. The railway repairmen workers have not been working due to not receiving their food rations for the months of September and October, but was forcibly called up to repair damages from this incident.

Meanwhile, relative to the 100-day battle, each city railway station bureau was told, "In order to prevent future accidents, each city railway should plan out a 100-day battle freight traffic plan and make sure that the cargos placed under the watch of workers get delivered on time. Also, railway yard passenger/freight car workers were ordered to work to repair and send the locomotive and freight car on time. Every station needs to increase the operation of facilities to reduce the stopping time of the freight cars.

Frequent Train Troubles in *Ryanggang* Province Being Blamed on Repairmen

During the 100-day battle, the *Ryanggang* Province *Baekamgoon* railway station branch office was instructed to transport the logs to the coal mine. However, the frequent breakdowns are slowing down production. The Committee of Armed forced party is strongly criticizing the repairmen for their lack of skill, but the repair workers are saying something else: the reason why the trains are having so many breakdowns is because they keep patching up old locomotives instead of replacing them with new ones and only repairing damaged parts instead of doing a full check-up. Also the workers said they should not just concentrate on the repairing but also focus on the upkeep of the quality of the components of the trains during the 100-day battle. Currently, in order to smoothly transport the logs, the railway station bureau is managing a special group of technicians. However, locomotive engineers are also playing a part in the frequent breakdowns. Due to their economic troubles, the locomotive engineers have been stopping the trains for NK 15,000 won at random locations at the request of merchants and traders, causing many problems in train operations.

***Bukchang* thermal power generation plant running into problems**

At the South Pyongan Province *Bukchang* district, the thermal power generation plant, the coal unloading machine was damaged, resulting in people unloading coal manually. Because the repairs were not done in a timely manner, on October 4th, the secretary and manager mobilized workers to bring shovels and unload the coal using manpower. If the transportation of coal is delayed, then the electricity will die out and affect other businesses during the 100-day battle. Thus, the workers had to finish the manually unloading the coal by the 12th of October.

[Politics]

Crackdown on Illegal Video Films in *Pyongsung*

On September 20, *Pyongsung* city in South *Pyongan* Province began a crackdown on illegal video films. In No.24 Unit of *Yonbong* dong, the investigators raided on two households and confiscated CDs that contained American movies and Chinese movies such as "The Daughter of the Emperor" as well as the CD players. Four residents who watched the illegal

videos and a person who purchased the CDs were arrested and put into interrogation. According to No.109 Commanding Office's investigation report, among the arrestees accused of watching illegal videos this fall, 20 were sent to re-education center, and the rest was sent to the City Discipline Center. Those who are currently under investigation will be sent to re-education center if any suspicious items were found in their homes.

***Hamheung* Created Drug Enforcement Team**

On Apr. 30th, *Hamheung* City in South *Hamgyong* Province picked up several officials to create drug enforcement team from each organization such as Party, police station, district attorney office, court, and Youth Union. As a first accomplishment though August, the team arrested about 10 people suspected of drug production, trafficking, and smuggling. In an open trial held on September 9th, they admitted to selling 10 kg of amphetamine produced in *Ryunbong-dong Soonchun* City between October 2009 and April 2010, and also transporting drug by transportation of *Daeheung* Trade Company. Security guards estimated the trade they were involved in amounted to tens of million NK won. Following the lecture the Security guards condemns the drug and gave a lecture on an illness of capitalism. They also asked people to report any drug-related offence to them and promised reward.

[Society]

***Pyongsung* Police Officers Frantic to Make Money**

On August 4, 2009, National Security Agency (NSA) has commenced an internal inspection on *Pyongsung* city for 20 days. During the inspection, they had focused on the officials of City Party, lawyers, and police officers. About 60 motor cycles belonging to these people were confiscated, but upon the officials' pleading, NSA gave back 40 bikes while 20 were distributed to military units under the 4th division. Those officials who lost their bikes treated the residents cruelly in order to recoup the price of their bikes. They ripped the residents off with any possible methods, so residents complained a lot. Residents said that they have to trade with controlled items in order to feed their family but the officers who were frantic to make money make very strict inspection. If a trader was arrested due to illegal conducts and was sentenced to go to the Labor Education Center for 3 years, they can be released on probation by paying 1.5 million won to police officers. If they do not pay, they have to go to the Center where the conditions are extremely bad, and inmates could die or get sick. Even after the release, they might suffer a lot all their lives. Therefore traders were forced to bribe police officers at the minimum with a carton of cigarette. Residents who experienced police officers' tyrannical conducts criticize them: "It is not easy to find more strict and cruel police officers than *Pyongsung* officers."

Buses Run again between *Hoeryong* and *Chungjin*, but It is still Inconvenient

A new bus service has recently begun its operation between *Hoeryong* to *Chungjin*. There are many traders and peddlers that visit these cities, but they had troubles with the transportation because there was no bus services after the 116 bus company closed its business and the traders had used ordinary trucks or coal delivery trucks. With this bus

service, the situation improved, but it is still inconvenient because the number of trips and vehicle capacity are not enough. To find a seat on the first bus, scheduled to leave at 7 AM, people have to wait since 6 am as it is not easy to get a seat and if they cannot find one, they have to stand all the way to their destination. The bus doesn't leave until there are over 60 passengers, but during the slow season, the number of passengers did not reach 60, and some days the morning bus did not leave until 5 PM.

On the other hand, there are many checkpoints between *Hoeryong* and *Chungjin* : *Changhae* Defense Security Command, *Poongsan* 10th Defense Security Command, 9th Division Police Station in Mt. *Komoo* Labor District, and *Buryung* Police station, and they impede the trading. Whenever they pass the three checkpoints, they have to get off the bus to show their residential ID or other certificates and to get an inspection on their luggage and trading items. If they have any problem with their items, they have to get off the bus with their goods to receive punishment. *Buryung* officers of Mt. *Komoo* County have been known for their strict inspection. They try to detect even a trivial problem so they can collect fines or rip off the trading items, even a single pack of cigarette. When the traveler's certificate does not say *Hoeryong* City as a destination, traders cannot enter or pass the border areas such as *Hoeryong* or Mt. *Komoo* County. Without exact destination and reasons for visit, it is hard to enter the border areas due to heightened inspection.

[Women/Children/Education]

Expanded Study Opportunity for the Children of the Overseas Staff

Staffs who reside in foreign countries can now bring one or two children from their home. Up until now they can only take one child less than 5 years old. Beginning this year, up to two children beyond middle school age can accompany their parent. Additionally, even though their parents return home at the end of their assignment, the children on the honor roll can stay on to continue their education. An official from the Central Party explains that, "the Country's foreign exchange situation is not good and we cannot educate talented children, so we allow them to study abroad with their own money."

Members of the Democratic Women's Union (DWC), *Heungnam* City, have difficulties due to Artistic Propaganda Activities

DWC of *Heungnam* city, South *Hamgyong* Province, has trained their members on the artistic propaganda and sends them to *Heungnam* fertilizer factory to encourage the laborers. As a means to tackle the food problem, the city independently came up with the idea to increase fertilizer production and send the fertilizers to the farms in the whole country. However, the members of the Artistic Propaganda Activities had difficulty in their livelihood during the 150 day battle period because they could not do any trading due to the artistic propaganda training. Husbands of some of the propaganda members confronted, saying "There's nothing to eat at home, what is the damn propaganda?" and (their wives) did not go. There are many households experiencing difficulties due to the women's participation in the propaganda unit.

Students Dispatched to Farms Go Back Home Because It Is Too Hard

In August, the Department of Labors (DOL) in *Sariwon* city, North *Hwanghae* Province, dispatched the new graduates to the Youth Unit in city's farms. But within a month, some of the students went back home. Some even went to their relative's home in far-away countryside in order to avoid the DOL staffs that were doing surveillance of unemployed. The DOL dispatched even sick students to the farms because if the sick students were dispatched in easy spots, the students dispatched to the farms would protest a lot. Nevertheless the children of high ranking officials and rich all got out. Only the powerless, poor people's children ended up doing the hard work in the farm.

[Accidents]

A Corn Thief Commits Suicide While Being Investigated

On October 7, a laborer assigned to the railroad working unit, *Sahmbong* station, *Onsung* County, Province of North *Hamgyong*, was arrested for stealing corn from the *Sahmbong* farm. He was taken to the police station and interrogated harshly. On third day of interrogation, October 10, as he could not withstand it any longer, he took his own life. He was usually a quiet man and it appeared that the physical and mental pressure of the cruel interrogation by the police officer was too much for him to withstand. His neighbors say that "This year even small patch farming was bad and there was nothing to eat, and he was forced to steal. It seems that he decided to take his own life as he was worried of his family's livelihood if he is sent to the training camp." There is a criticism among the residents that while a worker committed suicide for stealing three ears of corn, the concerned official did not take any responsibility.

***Heungnam* Marine Product Business Office Lost 8 tons of Squid Due to Poor Storage**

Heungnam Marine Product Business Office, *Heungnam* City, Province of South *Hamgyong*, lost due to poor storage about half of 16 tons of squid that was to be exported. The concerned officials were harshly criticized by the Marine committee. They were arrested on September 28 for the "crime of damaging the national export resources." The court told two Storage Chiefs that they could be pardoned if they can pay back the amount equivalent to 8 tons of rotten squid, if not they would receive punishment. The amount was extremely high, and the chiefs have no other option but to wait for the legal process.

[Editorial]

Corrupt Officials Must be Purged

There is an old Confucius saying that cruel public officials are more dreadful than tigers. Once Confucius was traveling in a palanquin through a deep and treacherous mountain and saw a woman weeping in front of three graves. He sent his disciple to find out why the woman was crying and learned that she was mourning the loss of her father-in-law, husband, and son, who were all killed by tigers. She knows that she too is in danger of being killed by a tiger at any moment, but has no choice but to live deep in the mountain. She is more afraid to live in town where corrupt officials exploit people with heavy taxes and torture.

This is why Confucius told his disciples that cruel public officials are more dreadful than tigers.

In some areas the residents' grievances are widespread because of public officials' excessive abuse of power and greed. In the case of the police officer in *Hyesan* city, people openly expressed antagonism which indicates a very severe abuse of power.

Three major types of grievances people have against public officials are:

First, the confiscations of things for personal misappropriation with the excuse of an official crack down. When cracking down on business, public officials confiscate merchandise ruthlessly saying some items are not allowed to be sold, and that regulation periods exist for certain times and places where selling is not permitted. The merchandise and fines confiscated this way are misappropriated for personal gain instead of government possession and people are very well aware of this fact.

Second, cruel and indiscriminate crack downs and punishments are disregarding the desperate situations people are facing. This is widely known (and has been for almost 15 years) ever since North Korea's food shortage problem began. When people are left alone for their own survival without government assistance some illegal activities can occur to stay alive. Nevertheless, there are numerous instances of excessive crack downs spurred on by societal controls and performance centeredness, which are taking away the means to basic necessities. It is like forcing people to tiger infested mountains.

Third, people believe that officials are enjoying excessive privileges. Officials are not only receiving assistance from the government, but they are also seizing outside aid for themselves first. The officials are provided with basic necessities and are exempted from various social mobilizations and non-tax burdens. They use their status as power that can be exercised against people. They can avoid inspections using their status and get away easily using bribery even when they get caught.

In some rare cases, dedicated officials strive to resolve basic necessity problems of people despite difficult conditions. Some of their actions may go against the policy of the Party, but their dedication to people should be recognized and their actions should be treated with discretion. The officials who cause much grievance because of their corrupt and wrongful acts ought to be investigated thoroughly and prosecuted by law when found guilty. However, discretions should be exercised in cases where actions were taken inevitably to help people with basic necessities.

The more chaotic and difficult the society becomes the more we should do things based on fairness and common sense. Blindly strengthening crack downs and punishments will not solve problems. In order to implement government mandates and orders effectively, officials should take the initiative and set good examples first. More than ever, what is needed is a system that sorts out corrupt officials who exploit people from those who

dedicate themselves to the welfare of people. Moreover, government policies that drive the poor to the mountains need to be reevaluated. ☀



Good Friends: Center for Peace, Human Rights, and Refugees



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' friends, 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.

Currently, Good Friends is making efforts to improve humanitarian and human rights situation of North Korean people and to inform this situation to the international community by:

- 1) Collecting information on food shortages, public health conditions, education, the basic necessities situations and inform humanitarian organizations so that they can support North Korean people effectively.
- 2) Reporting the current human rights situation in North Korea where rights duly protected by law are being violated; assessing incidents of human rights violations in the process of arrest, punishment, and imprisonment and informing international communities; and requesting that the North Korean Government act to improve human rights.
- 3) Investigating the current situations of North Korean refugees in China, and providing protections and aid for them and their children in particular.

For these purposes, Good Friends USA publishes the weekly newsletter North Korea Today (English edition) to inform the international public.

You can make a difference by donating to **Good Friends USA, Inc.** Contributions to the Good Friends USA, Inc. (a tax-exempt organization under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code) are tax deductible.

Individuals wishing to make a financial donation to **Good Friends USA** may send a check to the following address. For more information, please contact us.

Good Friends USA

(DC) 734 15th Street N.W. Suite # 500B, Washington, DC 20005

(MD) 4605 Powder Mill Rd., Beltsville, MD 20705

Phone: 202-824-0788(DC); 301-455-9196(Cell)

FAX: 301-937-0748

E-mail: goodfriends_usa@yahoo.com

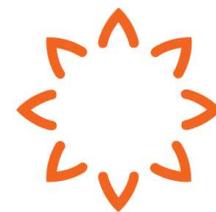
<http://www.goodfriendsusa.blogspot.com>

Good Friends Korea Headquarter

E-mail: goodfriends@jungto.org

Tel: 82-2-587-8992; Fax: 82-2-587-8998

<http://www.goodfriends.or.kr>



GOODFRIENDS