"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.

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On Releasing the 300th Edition of North Korea Today

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[Hot Topics]
On Releasing the 300th Edition of North Korea Today
This issue marks the 300th edition of the North Korea Today which was first published on September 1, 2004. All those issues represent a lot of effort on the part of many hard-working individuals. It is a pleasure and a privilege of North Korea Today to express gratitude and appreciation to those who made contributions with sacrifices.

The 300th edition summarizes the most up-to-date news of residents with simple explanations. We hope the newsletter will be of help to individuals who conduct research on North Korea and other interested parties. North Korea Today is focused on the lives of North Korean residents. Efforts are made to include stories of the residents as they are. These efforts cause more sadness than joy, as we uncover more heart-breaking incidents than happy occasions.

One issue is clear that the focus of such events whether of happiness, anger, sadness or joy, lays the issue of eating. This is the reason why information about food is so important, and consequently the trends in price changes of rice and corn are treated prominently. Reviewing recent news reveals that the economic activities of North Korean residents are limited to peddling and small plot farming. Inspections and prohibitions against the residents are causing friction throughout the nation. Awareness on the part of mid-level leaders and the residents is changing rapidly. We learn from all these processes that the keyword to core understanding of the residents is the ‘issue of eating.’ This reveals the painful reality of the residents and at the same time acts as a measure of stability in North Korean society.

North Korea Today will continue listening to the North Korean residents and report on what they think and want. Their lives, at some time in the future, may lead us to the issues of humanistic aid for North Korea and/or human
rights. In the meantime, such information could be useful in supporting projects for North Korean development on a short-term basis. In the mid- and long-term the accumulated information could serve as useful resources for a peaceful unification policy.

We are well aware of our limitations. One thing we can promise, though, is that we will try our utmost efforts in our sense of responsibility toward making a bright future for all Koreans.

[Food]
Grain Prices during 2008 – 2009
1. Changes in price of rice during 2008
   1) April – 2,500 to 2,800 NKW (3 times that of previous year)
   2) May-June – 3,800 to 4,000, Steep rise varies on region and dates {unstable market}
   3) July – 2,400 to 2,500 (Generally uniform prices nationwide, High price, but stable market)
   4) September – 2,800 to 3,000 (Price rose during mid-August)
   5) October – 2,200 to 2,400 (Lower prices due to early harvest)
   6) November-December – 2,000 to 2,300 (Lower prices due to harvest. Higher than 1,300 to 1,400 during January)

2. Causes of steep rise in grain prices in 2008
   1) Internal factors
      - Natural disaster: Flood damages during 2006 and 2007. Damages to grain warehouse area Hwanghae Province, South Pyongan Province and mountainous Kangwon Province
      - Policy failure: Ban on market activity and small plot farming. Confiscation of small plot farms. Failed attempt to return to food rationing system in October, 2005 led to reduction of food reserve by individuals.
      - Lack of maintenance of collective farms and fundamental shortage of agricultural material such as fertilizer, vinyl and pesticides
   2) External factors
      - Reduction of external aids due to missile launch and nuclear test in 2006
      - Suspension of support from South Korea in 2008 (400,000-ton grain and 300,000-ton fertilizer)
      - Ban on grain export by Chinese government causing steep rise in grain prices
      - Rise in international grain prices (reduced grain imports)
3. Changes in price of rice during 2009
   1) First half: stable in general in the range of 1,800 to 2,000
   2) Towards the end of August: Increasing to the range of 2,500 to 2,600
   3) Rise anticipated until harvest

4. Causes of changes in grain prices in 2009
   1) Stability during first half: Food shortage still serious. Restriction of
      market and reduction of purchasing power are the main reasons for
      rising prices.
      - Shrank market due to ban on market activity and 150-day battle
      - Shrinkage of purchasing power of the residents
   2) Reason for steep rise in September: Prices tend to rise until autumnal
      harvest in previous years.
      - Residents ran out of food by early fall
      - Residents could overcome this past difficult spring with previous
        year's crop but ran out of food by end of August
      - Price increase is anticipated until harvest

| Table 1 | Price of Rice 2008 – 2009 (unit: N.Korean Won)  
| Chungjin, North Hamgyong Province |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Mo Yr | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 |
| 2008 | 1,400 | 1,350 | 1,550 | 2,450 | 3,000 | 2,450 | 2,600 | 3,000 | 2,300 | 2,200 | 2,300 | 2,200 |
| 2009 | 1,750 | 1,800 | 1,900 | 1,900 | 1,900 | 2,000 | 2,000 | 2,600 | |

| Table 2 | Price of Corn 2008 – 2009 (unit: N.Korean Won)  
| Chungjin, North Hamgyong Province |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Mo Yr | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 |
| 2008 | 600 | 600 | 650 | 1,250 | 1,500 | 1,350 | 1,350 | 1,500 | 1,180 | 850 | 850 | 950 |
| 2009 | 800 | 730 | 730 | 750 | 850 | 730 | 800 | 850 | 1,200 | |

Food Situation during 2008 – 2009
   1) Shift of regions of occurrence of starvation deaths and type of
      people: South and North Hamgyong Provinces (1998) to South and
      North Hwanghae Provinces (2008), city laborers (1998) to rural farmers
      (2008)
   2) Reason why farmers of Hwanghae Provinces suffered most:
      - Steep reduction of crop due to flood damages, which occurred in
        2006 and 2007
- Steep reduction of food allotment to the farmers because of priority collection of grain for military provisions
- City laborers have learned to adjust to the harsh reality in the past 10 years by means of peddling, small plot farming. Rural farmers, on the other hand, continue with their traditional methods.

2. Persistent social phenomena in 2009
   1) Inattention to long-term malnutrition, especially among the most vulnerable groups (elderly and infants)
   2) Increase in dismantling of families and suicides out of despair
   3) Increase in desertions due to malnutrition, thefts and robberies by soldiers

2008 Food Situation Log

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Food Situation in North Korea</th>
<th>N. Korean Government's Response and External Situation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jan</td>
<td>Farmers begin borrowing corns from January</td>
<td>- China discontinues 13% tax return on major export grains from 12/20/2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>People concerned about running out of food by late February.</td>
<td>- Impose 5-25% export duties and put food export quota into effect</td>
</tr>
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<td>Hungry soldiers desert from military bases</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb</td>
<td>Ration suspended for Haeju railroad workers (for 3 months) and Gimchaek Steel Mill workers</td>
<td>- Lee administration in South Korea took office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>In welfare institutions, kids live on ground corn cob</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;Even landladies beg for food this year.&quot;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar</td>
<td>Absentee rate rises in Ryongyeon County and Jaeryung County (South Hwanghae Province), Chunma County (North Pyongan Province), Eunduk County and Chungjin City (North Hamgyong Province), and part of Pyongyang due to food shortage and suspended ration</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>In breadbasket areas, farm workers could not work due to food shortage</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Serious shortage in the army provisions. Record-breaking high price of rice and corn</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Apr  | - Death by starvation in detention camps, Kkotjebi shelters and orphanages  
- Death by starvation in Yangduk, South Pyongan Province  
- Despite strong measures to hold down the rice price at 2,200 won, the rice price in Haeju soars to 2,750 won/kg  
- Farming preparation delayed due to national fertilizer crisis and farm workers' absenteeism  
  - Pyongyang announces no ration until October  
- More people run away from work due to food crisis  
- Farming mobilization begins on April 23  
- Spring food crisis is worsening nationally. "The second Arduous March" begins  
- Suicide cases on rise nationally  
- "Food crisis is not only our problem but a global phenomenon."  
- North Korea requests China’s permission on 150,000 tons of grain export but China only permits 50,000 tons |
| May  | - Death by starvation occurs every day in almost all areas in North and South Hwanghae Province  
- Number of wanderers and Kkotjebis increases  
- 70-80% of children in farming area in South Hwanghae Province quit school  
- Food situation aggravates in Kangwon Province. Nampo City asks for food support. Residents near Pyongyang eke their living on thin gruel  
- Regulation on market activities became hazy as food crisis worsens  
- Food price soars. Rice price control has no effect.  
- North Korean authorities start to use the Party fund to distribute food in major cities and Public Enterprises  
- Rally to criticize South Korean President Lee's statement started  
- Central Party, "No possibility of solving food crisis"  
- The cabinet plans to announce the US aid of 500,000 tons of food |
| Jun  | - Death by starvation expands to all parts of North Hwanghae Province  
- Rice prices in North and South Hwanghae Province exceeds 4,000 won at once  
- UN food inspectors visit North Pyongan and North Hamgyong provinces  
- Chinese Vice President Xi Jinping visits Pyongyang |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Events</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| July | - The Party, the government and the military struggle to purchase food provisions  
- Famine and death by famine spread across the nation, including Hamju and Hamheung in South Hamgyong Province and the areas in Kangwon Province  
- The military force relies on porridge  
- Camps in Kangwon Province begin the "two-meals-a-day" campaign  
- Due to the ration shortage, military ordered to relocate the family of high ranking officers  
- In Seungho Division in Pyongyang, 65% of residents live on porridge  
- Death toll increases among people excluded from food distribution  
- China permits additional 100,000 tons of food export to North Korea  
- Border pass to purchase food made easier to issue  
Chairman Kim Jong-Il, “Solve food problem as the top priority"  
- Chungjin, Heungnam and Pyongyang begins distributing corns  
- The initial allocation of the food aid from the US arrives on June 29 |
| - The carpentry working unit in Ryongyeon County in South Hwanghae Province made three times more coffins than last year  
- Due to food crisis, the number of Kkotjebi and crimes caused by poverty increase  
- The educated turn to market activity due to continuing food crises  
- Truancy increases in elementary schools and kindergartens in rural villages in South Hwanghae Province  
- Rice price, 2,500-2,700 won/kg nationwide  
- Heungnam Fertilizer distributed in North Hamgyong Province  
- Food condition worst in Kangwon Province  
- Early barley harvest in North Hwanghae Province  
- "The US aid is our trophy."  
Merchant age regulation reemphasized  
- UN food inspectors visit Onsung and Hoeryong in North Hamgyong Province  
- WFP concerns over "humanitarian emergency" exacerbated  
- S. Korean tourist shot dead in Kumgang Mountain. The inter-Korean relationship worsened |
| August | - The US-aided food distributed in parts of Hamgyong and Hwanghae provinces  
- Heavy rain fall damages in Kaesong, Seoheung, Pyonggang (Kangwon)  
- The Second and third allocations of US aid arrive  
Department of Agriculture reports, “the sum of the harvest this year might only
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pyonggang and Chulwon counties in Kangwon Province</td>
<td>Troubled by corn thieves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yeonan and Bukchung counties</td>
<td>Corn thieves increasing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The 1st Corps of the 46th Division</td>
<td>Lived on grass meal in spring hardship season</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mining Public Enterprise in Northern District</td>
<td>Receives US aided wheat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workers of munitions factory in Jagang Province</td>
<td>Receives US-aided wheat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Hamkyong Province University</td>
<td>Distributes 15 potatoes a day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sinuiju University</td>
<td>Distributes 15Kg of corn in September</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Sep**
- Pyongyang and P'yongan Province holds Public Lectures regarding food situation
- Soonchun and Pyongsung will not provide food this and next year
- Chungjin looses regulation until food distribution restarts
- Authorities of each province resolve to secure the army provisions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kangwon Province</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Households who are able to eat potatoes</td>
<td>Considered to be wealthy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction sites, military bases and orphanages in North Hamgyong Province</td>
<td>Distribute the October ration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residents in Kaesong</td>
<td>Live on corn, except those in Kaesong Industrial Complex</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Oct**
- Food distributions completed in early October in Gimchaek Steel Mill, Chungjin
- Hamheung branch of National Science Institute restarts food distribution after a lapse of a year

Nov
- Soonchun Vinalon United Enterprise restarts corn distribution after a lapse of a year
- Danchun Refinery in South Hamgyong Province distributes food by late November

Dec
- Ryongpo-ri Farm in Jungju city, North Pyongan Province, two meals of potato per day
- Yeonbak Plain farmers’ crop share only equivalent to 4 to 6 months’ food supply
- Annual grain production increase in Kangwon, South Pyongan, and North and South Hwanghae provinces
- Medical workers in South Pyongan Province receive ration of whole corn
- Soonchun Mine Machinery Factory distributes 7.5kg of corn ration in December

Food Situation in 2009

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Food Situation in North Korea</th>
<th>N.Korean Government’s Response and External Situation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jan</td>
<td>Pyongsung Food Distribution Center in South Pyongan Province fails to operate properly.</td>
<td>The government announced that it would operate food distribution centers as part of the implementation of the general market closure policy, but failed to deliver promised rations due to a lack of food in the distribution centers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Food Distribution Center in Sinuiju, North Pyongan Province, fails to sell food</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Price of rice at the Food Distribution Center in Cungjin, North Hamgyong Province, only 100 N.Korean won lower than the market price</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Each collective farm in South Pyongan</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Province</td>
<td>Food Distribution Details</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Hamgyong</td>
<td>- Jickari Farm in North Hamgyong Province distributes food in 7-8 month quantities</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Ongjin County Farm in South Hwanghae Province distributes food in 6 month quantities</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Jaeryung County Farm in South Hwanghae Province distributes food with an average quantity of less than 150 kg</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Chungjin Saguri Farm in North Hamgyong Province distributes whole corn amounts that average 230kg</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Soonchun Cement Factory, no food distribution in January</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Hwanghae</td>
<td>- The Jilin Province of China allows the export of 20,000 tons of food to North Korea</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Feb                            | - Anak County in South Hwanghae Province, absenteeism appears on collective farms due to lack of food                                                   |
|                                | - Gimchaeck Steel Mill in Chungjin, North Hamgyong Province, distributes food for February holiday (15 day quantity)                                 |
|                                | - Only the Yonghae unit in the Gimchaeck Steel Mill in Chungjin, North Hamgyong Province, distributes food for February (in addition to the holiday food distribution) |
|                                | - 40% of the Miners in Seongchun County in South Pyongan Province survive on grass porridge                                                               |
|                                | - No 118 Missile Engine Factory in Kaechun City, South Pyongan Province, halts food distribution starting in February                                      |

<p>| Mar                            | - People in Danchun City, South Hamgyong Province, survive on porridge                                                                                |
|                                | - People in Hongwon County, South Hamgyong Province, survive on corn porridge                                                                        |
|                                | - People in Shinpo City, South                                                                                                                        |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Apr</td>
<td>Hamgyong Province</td>
<td>People survive on grass roots and vegetable porridge. - Giemchaeck Steel Mill in Chungjin, North Hamgyong Province, no food distribution for March. - Hoeryung City, North Hamgyong Province, distributes 7.2 kg of corn for March. - People survive on sweet potatoes in North Pyongan Province.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr</td>
<td>Pyongyang</td>
<td>Food distribution is halved in April. - Kangdong County Mine, South Pyongan Province distributes food in 15-day quantities. - Kangseo County Mine, South Pyongan Province distributes food in 15-day quantities. - Ohbong Mine in Eunduk County, North Hamgyong Province, no food distribution at all this year. - Workers in Danchun Machinery Repair Factory, South Hamgyong Province, survive on tree-bark porridge.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>Moonam Collective Farm in Danchun County, South Hamgyong Province</td>
<td>People survive on sea algae porridge. - Chulwon County military unit in Kangwon Province, distributes 400g of food. - Heechun City Machinery Factory in Jagang Province halts food distribution from April on.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jun</td>
<td>Ryongsung district in Pyongyang</td>
<td>Advance notice that there will be no food distribution until September. - The Central district in Pyongyang anticipates a food deficiency starting in July. - Workers in the Petrol Barrel Factory in Pyongyang are provided with one meal of porridge a day.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jun</td>
<td>Central district in Pyongyang</td>
<td>Anticipates a food deficiency starting in July.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jun</td>
<td>Petrol Barrel Factory in Pyongyang</td>
<td>Workers are provided with one meal of porridge a day.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Month</td>
<td>Events</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Jul   | - Kaechun Mine Association, South Hamgyong Province, halts food distribution starting in late May  
  - 40% of doctors in Kim Jungsuk Nursing Home survive on two meals of porridge a day  
  - South Hwanghae Province halts food distribution to workers mobilized for farming  
  - Lack of food and construction material at the Uhrangchun Power Plant in North Hamgyong Province  
  - Shinpo Seniors’ Home, South Hamgyong Province, provides corn-powder porridge  
  - Department of Agricultural worries about small harvest due to low temperatures  
  - North Hamgyong Province suffers severely from corn insects due to low temperatures |
| Aug   | - Food crisis among people in rural areas with no food left. They try to borrow food from others  
  - People in rural areas in South Hwanghae Province survive on three meals of early-harvested corn a day  
  - Farmers in North Hwanghae Province survive on one or two meals of porridge a day  
  - Farmers in Ryonggan County, South Pyongan Province, survive on one or two meals of porridge a day |
| Sep   | - Food crisis continues until harvest season in North and South Hwanghae Province because people cannot afford to buy food  
  - Kowon County in South Hamgyong Province distributes 5kg of barley to households surviving on porridge  
  - Food crisis in the construction brigade in Heechun Power Plant, Jagang Province |

**[Economy]**

**Announcement: Abolition of General Market in 2008**

1. The 2008 New Year’s Editorial Announced the Abolition of the General Market
1) The editorial, emphasizing the restoration of true socialism, warned more intense control of the General market.
2) The editorial stressed the overcoming of the ideological penetration from U.S.A and South Korea and an ideological solidarity to build a strong socialistic nation. This reflects North Korea’s underlying sense of crisis, that is, economic reforms and open door policies will lead to its collapse.
3) The market system is regarded as an anti-socialism habitat.

2. Strong Repeated Emphases on the Abolition by the Second Half of 2008--Launched the Model Farmers’ Markets in Major Cities including Pyongsung and Hamheung.

2008 Market Situation

2. In some areas of Northern Hamgyung Province, women under 40 facing livelihood difficulties are allowed to do business. For example, women living with in-laws or with college student husbands who can’t earn salary or distribution for their wives, and women with low incomes should work in markets to make a living.

3. Intensified market control after the election of the Supreme People’s Assembly delegates on March 8
   1) Prohibition of doing business for women under 40
   2) Restriction on sales Items: products manufactured by joint ventures, heavy machinery, electronic products, and American and South Korean Products
   3) Restriction on the number of sales products. (e.g., the sales limits per person are 5 ready-made clothes, 10 processed goods, and 20 kilograms of grains.)

4. Cold wave of recession over major markets.
   1) More sellers than buyers in markets. Sellers are crying over their slow business.
   2) Markets faced difficulties due to intensified regulations and restrictions on the mobility of residents during the March 8 Election and the 150 Day Battle.
   3) 40% decrease of the number of sellers in Hamheung City.

5. Punishment on the sales of non-agricultural items according to the ‘February 17 Policy’
1) Announcement: ‘Selling prohibited items will be punished as an act of anti-socialism’
2) No official announcement regarding the reform of the farmers’ market but the restructuring of the market has been accelerated.

6. June 2009: Decision to shut down the Pyungsung General Market, known as ‘the source of all market businesses.’

7. As of September 2009: Due to the first half of the 150 Day Battle and the gradual transformation of general markets to farmers’ markets, markets in general have been shrinking but still continue and survive.

### 2008 Market Controls

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Control</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jan</td>
<td>Age Restrictions of Sellers</td>
<td>Announcement: “No business in markets is allowed for women under age 40”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar</td>
<td>Deployment of Women under 40 at factories</td>
<td>Announcement: “Deploy all women under 40 at work places”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Warning: Absent women will be reported to their husbands’ workplaces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Regardless of age, women with three or more children are allowed to do business in markets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr</td>
<td>Sinuiju: No Sales Products in Carts</td>
<td>“Don’t carry luggage in carts or on bicycles,” meaning, “do not carry sales items.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jun</td>
<td>Pyongsung: Ban on Big Sales</td>
<td>The activities of the Joint Crack-Down Team organized between Pyongsung City Party, Peoples Council, Police Office, and Market Management Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“No big sales is allowed”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Criticism on Pyongsung: “The whole sale center of the nation but is the main source of all market businesses”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aug</td>
<td>Pyonyang: Emphasis on the Deployment of Women at Factories</td>
<td>Age Restrictions of Sellers. Emphasis on placing women in factories: “Women should contribute to social development” and “Pyonyang should be the example for local cities and counties”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct</td>
<td>Age Restrictions of Sellers.</td>
<td>Age restriction reissued – sales ban on sellers under forty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Shoe Sales Ban</td>
<td>Nationwide ban on domestic shoe products in markets: Department of Commerce decision issued to markets nationwide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Month</td>
<td>Controls</td>
<td>Result</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan</td>
<td>Closed national comprehensive market. Restructuring of farmer’s market was postponed for six months</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar</td>
<td>Strict movement control in preparation for Supreme People's Council Senior Members Assembly (March 8)</td>
<td>Business at marketplaces drops due to travel restrictions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr</td>
<td>In Chungjin, N. Hamgyong, ban on sale of items other than agricultural produce in marketplaces</td>
<td>Sellers go door to door, back-alley sales, sell &amp; run sales in order not to pay the sales booth fee or continue selling of banned items</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Hand-Crafted Product Sales
- “Sales of individually cultivated fruits and vegetables, fish and daily-use items are only allowed for sales.”

### Nov
- Direct: Restructuring of general markets into farmers’ markets (Department of Commerce Direct No.23 and No.61)
- Yeonsa County: Goods in Stock are only allowed for business
- Announcement of market conversion to the farmers’ market from Jan 1, 2009
- Sales are allowed only on the 1st, 11th, and 21st of each month. Sales of individually cultivated fruits and vegetables, fish and daily-use items are only allowed
- Food, industrial products, and pork are banned. Food is sold only at the Food Distribution Center. Other products are sold only in the state-run stores
- Yeonsa County, Northern Hamgyong Province: “Get rid of all stock items. The sales will be entirely banned from the new year.”

### Dec
- Model Farmers’ Markets In Major Cities.
- Major cities such as Pyongyang, Hamheung, Soonchun, Kaesung, and Chungjin run model farmers’ markets
- Sales are allowed only on the 1st, 11th, and 21st of each month
- Sales of food and industrial products are banned.
- Agricultural products are only allowed for sales
People’s Response to Market Control by Government

1. Restriction on sale and operation hour, rise of back-alley sales, sell & run sales tactics, trading in cars and black market

2. Restriction on the item of sales, increase of door-to-door sales and soliciting customers only by the list of items (sales by invitation – in which sellers approach potential buyers with a list of items and invite interested persons to a private place to complete the transaction)

3. Restriction on the age of seller (under aged vendors required to bring mother or mother-in-law to transaction) women’s anti-age restriction protest in Chungjin City, frequent conflicts between sellers and enforcement officers and attempts to cross border by women at the border towns
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Control</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dec (2008) Major cities nationwide</td>
<td>All officials</td>
<td>Investigation on private houses: punishment on new construction of private houses or luxurious houses  - Hyesan City, Ryanggang Province: 54 officials dismissed  - Hoeryung, N.Hamgyong Province: City prosecutor dismissed. Other officials demoted to laborer or farmer status  - Pyongsung, S.Pyongan Province: 21 officials dismissed and ousted from the Party  - Provincial Party Work Secretary of Jagang Province dismissed for illegal modification of his private house on May 2.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jan N.Hamgyong Province</td>
<td>Agricultural workers in N.Hamgyong Province</td>
<td>Punishment for insufficient military rice provision- 9 of Ri Party Secretaries dismissed due to failure to secure their assigned military rice provision</td>
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<tr>
<td>N.Pyongan Province</td>
<td>Hospital workers under Provincial Health Department</td>
<td>Control on counterfeited medical certificate  - Laborers demand counterfeited medical certificate to avoid attendance to their work place  - 40 incidents identified during investigation. Actual cases presumed to be more than that</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Feb Nationwide</td>
<td>Officials related to electricity</td>
<td>Electricity Department led Provincial Electricity Cross-Investigation (But Hwanghae and N.Pyongan Provinces performed self-investigation)  - Pyongsung, S.Pyongan Province: Provincial Chief Instructor and Electricity Distribution Manager put into public execution(Feb 2)  - Hamheung, S.Hamgyong Province: 7 managers of factory and national enterprises sentenced to re-education</td>
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<tr>
<td>Month</td>
<td>Province/Location</td>
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<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>Bochun, Ryanggang Province</td>
<td>Police officers</td>
<td>Illicit sale of scrap iron - Expulsion and dismissal of 40 incumbent police officers - They are accused of taking the profit from selling scrap iron collected from residents for 600 won per kg</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Hoeryung, N.Hamgyong Province</td>
<td>Ri Party Secretary, Workers in collective farms</td>
<td>1. Collected money for buying agricultural supplies and took it for themselves 2. Selling or using of grain for personal benefit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>Nationwide</td>
<td>City/County Party Leading Secretary</td>
<td>1. Responsible official at the Central Party dismissed for delayed construction at Mt. Baekdu site 2. Warning of punishment of the responsible official if food and other necessary supplies are not provided to the laborers at Mt. Baekdu Construction Site</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>Nationwide</td>
<td>All Party members</td>
<td>1. Party Central Council ordered “Officials must spell out in repentance every illegal acts they committed within the last three years” 2. Reinforced Public Letter Diary in order to encourage cross surveillance over each other</td>
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<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>Ryanggang Province</td>
<td>Provincial Party officials</td>
<td>After fleeing of Provincial Youth Alliance 1 Secretary, all related officials were punished - Dismissal of Provincial Party Leading Secretary, Organization Secretary, Propaganda Secretary, Work Secretary, Head of Security Department (June 17)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August</td>
<td>National Border Area</td>
<td>All officials</td>
<td>Central Party Investigative Group - investigate illegal acts of officials in the national border area - comprised of exemplary workers of National Security Agency and students of Keumsung Political College (School of</td>
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</table>
60 officials arrested for illicit trade and protection in Sinuiju, N.Pyongan. Most extreme punishment expected for 20 of them.

Ideology investigation project in Kangwon Province resulted in 80 officials arrested, 20 sentenced for re-education, some for death penalty. Others dismissed from their position, or their family members expelled to other regions.

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<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Authority</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jan</td>
<td>National Border Area</td>
<td>National Security Agency</td>
<td>1. Anti-socialism Investigation Group - investigated number of family members, names, livelihood - in order to control spy activities and crossing the national border 2. Special Lectures - “Report on people who defected to South Korea” - “A family member crosses the border, everyone will be expelled” - “Those deported from China will be sentenced to re-education up to 10 years” - “Save food and make careful allocation for many days”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feb</td>
<td>Nationwide</td>
<td>Safety Bureau of each region</td>
<td>1. Strict movement control in preparation for Supreme People’s Council Senior Members Assembly (March 8) 2. Radio wave detection team was sent to investigate 3. National Security Command investigation 4. Anyone without a pass to be put into detention center from March 9</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>National Border Area</td>
<td>Safety Bureau of the region</td>
<td>1. Reinforced control over lodging 2. Radio wave detection team was sent to investigate 3. National Security Command investigation 4. Anyone without a pass to be put into detention center from March 9</td>
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<td></td>
<td>All N.Pyongan Province</td>
<td>National Defense Council,</td>
<td>February 10-14. Full-scale control over trading in small alleys</td>
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<tr>
<td>Month</td>
<td>Area</td>
<td>Committee</td>
<td>Actions</td>
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| April | National Border Area | Central Party Investigation | 1. Investigate if the TV channel is set to a fixed position  
2. Investigate possession of illegal video  
3. Sudden withdrawal of 27th office investigators on May 17 because they interfere with 150-day battle work  
- people whose TV and computers confiscated do not go to work and try every means to get them back, so County Parties appealed to the Central Party |
| May | Hamheung, S.Hamgyung | Safety Bureau | Cracking down on drugs until Sept 9 |
| June | Eunduk, N.Hamgyung Province | Safety Bureau | Cracking down on illegal alcohol until June 2-4 |
| June | Nationwide | Safety Bureau, disciplinary teams | Control on women's dress  
- Cracking down on women who are not wearing skirts  
- Pants are allowed for women to wear from July, but the color should not be gray or black. |
| July | National Border Area | National Security Agency | Increased control on households whose family member defected from North Korea  
- 20 people arrested in N.Hamgyung Province from January to June accused of their relation with South Korea. 15 of them put to life sentence.  
- Order issued to tighten the surveillance of every family member of defectors who went to South Korea |
| Nationwide | National Environment Bureau under People’s Safety Agency | Nationwide forest investigation from June 20 |
| Sariwon, City Party | | Final review of Anti-socialism Investigative |
N.Hwanghae Province
Safety Bureau
Group's work
- Comprised of selected 25 from each of Youth Alliance, Workers Alliance, Women's Alliance, Farmers' Alliance
- Results of investigation in June revealed 58 drop-outs of organizational life without any job, 27 Party members, 37 Youth Alliance members, 30 farmers who do not go to work. They were sentenced to be punished at City Discipline Center
- 10 women who traded sex for money put to public trial
- 60 households without registration identified, 40 of them were fined, the rest 20 were expelled

August
Chungjin, N.Hamgyung Province
National Security Agency
Political lectures against border crossing
- "Anyone accused of crossing the national border and/or using cell phones will be severely punished and put to public accusation."

**[Society]**

**Enforced 150-Day Battle in 2009**

1. **Background of the 150-Day Battle:** Kim Jung-Il Announces the Construction Scheme of the Strong and Prosperous Nation to the Officers of the Central Committee of the Party on December of 1994
   - Scientific revival by one’s own effort – the nation must be revived by its own efforts by securing the modern scientific technology, not by making a rule-of-thumb estimate
   - Improvement of the relationship between North Korea and the U.S. – improvement of foreign trade relationship and the relationship between neighboring countries is the precondition for the construction of rich and powerful nation
   - Emphasis on scientific technology

2. **Objective of the 150-Day Battle**
   - A strategic move to open the Strong and Prosperous nation by 2012
   - The 150-day battle is the realization of the Strong and Prosperous nation
   - Promoted national policy towards ‘Strong and Prosperous nation’ on this basis for the past 15 years
   - The relationship between neighboring countries is still unstable due to: the aggravation of North Korea’s isolation in the international
community; the North Korean nuclear issue resulting in conflict between North Korea and the U.S.; and the new South Korean administration of Lee Myung-bak resulting in tense relationship between North and South Korea
- Internally, aggravation of food and economic crisis and the people’s poverty problems increase social confusion
- ‘2012 Strong and Prosperous nation’ is presented as a national vision that will overcome the national and international insecurity and an attempt to gather the full ability of the people for the last time

- Emphasizes the three spirits: do-or-die spirit to guard the Great Leader, spirit to revive by one’s own effort and spirit of collectivism
- Encourages the 150-day battle with propagandas such as, “Learn the combative spirit of the people from Jagang Province,” “Attune the heartbeat with the arduous march of the General. Then a miracle and a reformation will occur,” and “Show the three: the courage of a forerunner, the pride of a powerful person, and the boldness of a creator.”

4. People’s Response
- Officers are skeptical about the outcome of the 150-day battle due to the ‘destruction of the resource supply system, lack of materials and lack of food’
- People complain that their lives are worse off due to the restriction in trade, regulation on mobility, harsh labor and food crisis
- “The 150-day battle is not to open the gate of the strong and prosperous nation but to close the gate so the strong and prosperous nation would pass by”
- Complaints are internalized as it is said that “the 150-day battle is the battle of death and inflicts pain on the laborers”

Re-visit to related previous articles
* The article below is an anecdote that shows the impossibility of achieving successful results from the 150-day battle due to the lack of materials, food, fertilizers, and other farming equipment

[Correspondence from Pyongyang]
[NKT No.283] Production of Six Million Ton, Goal of 150-Day Battle
It has been one month since the 150-day battle started. On June 6th, which is the usual day for residents’ monthly general meetings, an extended general meeting of the primary party was called. This meeting featured enthusiastic
members of Korean Farm Labor Union as instructed by the superior party. The
meeting was guided by the county party secretary and was attended by the
chairman of county cooperative management and neighboring Li party
secretaries. The meeting was held at the county conference hall and all the
empty seats were filled with county workers. Everyone in attendance wore a
solemn expression. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss and pass a
resolution that called for the production of six million tons of grain, as
demanded by the party. The hope was that the meeting would provide
workers with ideological motivation to encourage farm workers to increase
their efforts for the next farm battle. For most of the meeting, not a single
word of counter-criticism was uttered at the meeting and the entire time was
spent repeating standard and motivational slogans. At one point though, the
entire meeting was brought to a stunned silence by blunt statements made
by a party member and veteran:

“If our farms are to achieve the goal of six million tons of grains, they would
need to produce about 4.5 tons per Jungbo. That might have been possible
during the 1970s, or even in the middle of 1980s, but since then haven’t
production levels fallen to no more than 1.5 or 2 tons per Jungbo? Isn’t the
problem obvious? Everyone knows that the lack of fertilizer is the problem.
Why does everyone try to find other causes? Our farms have been fertilized
with manure for the last ten years. We have spent a lot of manpower and
money. Did it make a difference? Manpower has not been the problem and
this year is no different. Everyone talks about, ‘Farmyard manure, farmyard
manure, farmyard manure.’ Where are we supposed to get good farmyard
manure? Isn’t that true that this county (Gangnam County, Pyongyang) does
not any? The mountains don’t even have any trees left. Is it really surprising
that the dirt from the mountains is no better than the dirt from the fields?
Human excrement is limited. Dirt dredged from the bottom of the river would
be good, but it is far away and we would need fuel we don’t have to get it
here. We would need at least several hundreds of Jajooho truckloads."

The county party secretary anxiously interjected, saying:

“Comrade, what you are saying is something everyone in this meeting
already knows. What good is pointing out something we already know? The
challenge is to find a solution. Instead of complaining, give us some
solutions.”

I could not stand it any longer. I got up and said, “I have an alternative
solution; Fertilizer issues should be addressed by the farming system. Shouldn’t
we be helping the farmers? Farmers cannot solve these problems by
themselves, can they? What happened to all the ammoniated fertilizers that
were so popular in 1970s? If we can't solve this problem, how can we expect
the farmers to solve it by themselves?"

I added, "Comrade, what you have said is already known by the Party and
the Cabinet, but the state is facing difficult times. That is why this problem
remains. As you know, there is 150-day battle going on. If everything was
going well, why would there be the need for a 150-day battle? If you are
aware of the problem, why do you say things like this, as a member of the
party? Please think about what is happening and stop complaining. Don't
we need to face these difficulties together? We should remain optimistic with
all our hearts about our future, because if we do the gates to a strong and
prosperous nation will be opened in 2012."

Some in the audience applauded and cheered, “Yes, way to go!” Even
though I had spoken, I am not really sure what the solutions to the problems
we face are. Who can possibly solve this problem? Everyone knows there is
no answer, so they just try to ignore it. This is the way it has been and, barring
a miracle or unforeseen events, this is the way it will be for a long time to
come.

[Women/Children/Education]

Women's Heavy Labor Burden
1. Women’s labor duties to maintain family living includes: trading any
possible items, farming on the small patches of land, collecting wild greens,
etc.
   - Intensified inspections on female traders under the age of 40 have
     caused difficulties maintaining a family living with trades. Trading in
     markets is not allowed, so more time and effort is being transferred to
     door-to-door sales and peddling.
   - Women have to clear an additional patch of land on top of their
     usual duties of farm labor and obtaining fertilizer because of the ban
     on small patch farming and land confiscations.
   - Cool temperatures and a drought this year have produced poor
     harvests forcing women to collect acorns, wild greens, mushrooms,
     etc.

2. All kinds of labor for the society: repairing roads, cleaning up town,
   construction of the Uhrang Power Plant, construction at Mt. Baekdu,
   construction of the Heechon Power Plant in Jagang Province
   - Housewives have typically been regarded as supplemental
     workforce and mobilized for non-payment labor such as road repair
     or cleaning.
Because many farmers died of starvation last year causing the workforce at the farm to decrease, the government promised to provide women with food to entice them to work on the farms. The government did not keep their promise, so many women left the farms.

For the purposes of creating a powerful nation, the government mobilized members of the Democratic Women’s Union (DWU) for construction of the Urang Power Plant, Mt. Baekdu, and the Heecheon Power Plant, referred to as the special labor brigade. Women complained about their treatment and called themselves “members of the DWU Discipline Center” rather than members of DWU.

3. Full responsibility of house chores
- Since the socialist system collapsed, it became impossible to convert domestic labor into social work supported by the government.
- Women’s full responsibility of domestic labor is unlikely to change because the entire society still follows the patriarchal value system.

4. Result
- Severe inspections on trade in the market, small patch farming, and the government’s mobilization caused critical economic problems for women and their families.
- As supporting family became harder, the number of women who crossed the river to China, traded drugs, or conducted more dangerous and illegal behaviors increased.
- Women’s health has deteriorated due to physical fatigue caused by prolonged labor.
- In general, when a woman dies, her family loses unity and disperses.
- The remaining family members separate and wander, negatively impacting social orders. North Korean women’s overburdened of labor to earn a living for the family, non-payment for society labor, responsibility for all domestic labor, and more are negatively influencing women’s health. When women are sick or pass away, poor families tend to face severe economic problems and finally break up and disperse. Because the society cannot take care of the problem, the children of these families become Kkotjebis and wander around. Women’s issues are directly related to children’s issues and hence become social problems.

Three Big Issues for Children
1. Health: Children are the most serious victims of malnutrition. It hurts their physical development and there is a high rate of infant mortality and a low average life expectancy.

2. Education: Because of the critical burden of non-tax payments, poor families cannot send children to school. The poor have lost their rights for education.

3. Kkotjebi (children without any guardians or protection): Most children of extremely poor families, orphans, or whose mother died or is sick, become Kkotjebi. The government runs welfare institutions and orphanages, but these institutes are very poor and cannot care for these children. The extremely bad conditions of these institutes send children back into streets, where they are neglected.

[Editorials]
* Re-visit to previous editorials that are still relevant

[NKT No.292] Surplus Rice Stock Should be Sent to Save Lives!
There is a country where surplus rice is a concern. By the end of this year the rice stock inventory in South Korea will surpass over one million tons. Since the maintenance cost of storing 100 thousand tons of rice is about 30 billion won per year, the amount of tax money spent on storing one million tons of rice is about 300 billion won. The government has announced that it will purchase 100 thousand tons as a remedy for this problem. Also, there are talks regarding developing dried bread made of rice, rice instant noodle, rice bread, rice wine and rice pasta to encourage the consumption of rice. This is the current situation in South Korea as of August 2009.

A household where people eat three meals per day is considered a well-to-do home. We are talking neither about eating rice nor about eating corn meal. We are talking about “grass porridge” although we’re not sure if we can call it porridge because grass is diluted to the maximum in order to increase the quantity. People can’t even afford to eat this grass porridge to fill their stomachs. That is the reality of rural areas in North Korea.

The major media channels in South Korea cite suspension of food aid to North Korea as the reason for surplus rice. Every year since 2000 about 400,000-500,000 tons of rice was sent to North Korea, but it ceased last year. So, that is the reason for surplus rice. Some say that the level of rice inventory can drop 200,000 tons if North Korean food aid is resumed. As such, those who are in favor of resuming North Korean food aid just for the purpose of adjusting the rice supply are gaining support. Some of the farmers’
organizations claim that the fallen rice price is causing a disaster for them and insist that, “Food aid to North Korea should be put into a law,” in order to ease the rice surplus problem.

In South Korea, people are worried about a disaster caused by too much rice, whereas in North Korea people are concerned about a disaster caused by lack of rice. Since South Korea has to consume the surplus rice one way or another, there is no reason why they should not resume the food aid to North Korea. The budget earmarked for North Korean food aid in 2008 was 197 billion to 400 million won. Although not a single coin was actually spent from that allocation, wouldn’t it be better to spend 200 billion won for North Korean food aid than spend 300 billion won for maintaining the inventory of rice? Wouldn’t it be wise if we resolve the rice surplus problem and provide relief to the farmers while at the same time save fellow Koreans in North Korea from starvation? It is hard to understand why the government is hesitant about resuming food aid to North Korea when doing so is clearly humanitarian as well as rational. Perhaps their sentiment is such that they would rather throw away the food instead of giving it away as aid to spite the North Korean government. However, we must not forget the fact that the starving children and the elderly are alienated people who are not cared for by the North Korean government.

The Minister of Food, Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries said on August 13th in an interview that, “Solving the surplus rice problem by providing food aid to North Korea is not the fundamental solution.” It is questionable that the tariff policy being discussed within a related government agency is the fundamental solution. However, it is deplorable that “people” are invisible in the government official’s view of the problem. We hope that government officials with executive power recognize the desperate people in life threatening situations separate from politics or ideology.

What would those starving North Korean people think if they hear that they are making dried bread and instant noodles with rice in South Korea because of an unmanageable surplus of rice? What a dreadful and shameful thing it is. What is more important than saving lives? How does it differ from dumping the rice into the sea because of a surplus? Why look for a complicated solution when there is a simple one? Let’s send the surplus rice to North Korea. That is the humane and rational thing to do. That is the way to prevent the rice price from falling as well as offering a stable solution to resolve the current tension between South and North Korea.

[NKT No.279] Ban on Business and Small Patch Farming, Why Repeating Bad Policies
“We would die without small patch field.” That is the immediate reaction
from North Korean people in response to confiscation of personal small patch field. We can feel the urgency of people’s feeling with these words. It was during the Arduous March during the 1990s when small patch farming spread out nationwide. That was because people desperately clung to small patch farming, as they were being starved to death and felt that the only way to survive is doing small patch farming with their own hand. Since then people desperately worked on small patch farming so that they could survive. Rough terrain in the mountain with over 60 degrees of slope was not an issue in front of their determination to survive. This is why bare mountains spread throughout the country and big flooding is recurring every year. It is not an overstatement to say that ‘small patch farming’ along with ‘doing business’ is the only means of survival.

In May of 2007, wild fire in the mountain broke out consecutively in Hoeryung and Changpyong, North Hamgyong Province. That was an act of arson committed by those who lost their small patch fields. One of these who got caught shouted, “If you don’t allow me to do small patch farming, I would not allow you to plant trees either.” Sensing the complaints among people the Central Party initiated ideological lectures and announced, “This year, we will release the food distribution unconditionally. Therefore, small patch farming is no longer necessary. Do not continue the absurd behavior that will harm yourself and your family.”

The policy banning small patch farming was issued in 2008 as well. However, the policy had to be on hold due to severe food shortage comparable to Arduous March. In 2009, the authorities started recalling small patch farms as they announced. The phenomenon of ‘death’ is occurring immediately because the elderly people who know nothing other than small patch farming are committing suicide. The authorities are afraid of rumors spreading about the suicides. So, they are handling them quietly because they are aware of people’s sentiments.

Even then, the authorities are currently executing ‘150-day battle’ (work as if in battle). There have been several battle style business practices such as 70-day combat, 120-day combat during the 1970s and 1980s. Those battle business practices were to encourage mass movement. However, the current battle is different in nature. It is being executed aimlessly without clear economic indices. The rules are very stiff as well. Previously, there was no such rule saying you have to report to work by certain time. Everything was done voluntarily. The current situation of ‘forced mobilization’ clearly shows the level of non-compliance on the part of people. It appears that the gap between the people and the Party is widening just like that.

People speak out without hesitation. Again, only the weakest will be
sacrificed and the policy is going to wither away. Not being able to abolish general market is for the same reason. The question is whether implementation of this policy is feasible when the majority of people make living out of small patch farming and business with the exception of a small number of privileged classes in Pyongyang, officials, military personnel, and munitions factory workers. The Central Party must be aware of the problems. Then, what is the reason for repeating the same bad policy over and over again? We can find the answers in people’s distrust of the Central Party, unilateral control-centered policies issued by the Party, and the ever-increasing level of distrust of the Party because of the policies. In short, bad policies can only be repeated as they attempt to recover societal control in the old way although the situation has changed and the Party has lost its control completely.

The authorities must listen to people’s voice coming from the bottom of the society. People act voluntarily only when the state accepts people’s demands and interests and when they develop the feeling of ownership of the society by themselves. Creative ideas are required at this point on. Things should not be banned simply because people’s means of sustenance goes against “our own version of socialism.” Efforts should be made to think in mid-to-long terms perspectives and come up with ways to accommodate people’s needs with their ‘voluntary’ cooperation. Attempts of placing tight control on people’s means of sustenance will inevitably translate into political burden on the part of North Korean authorities. North Korean authorities should stop the mistake of repeating the bad policies, and must be able to shake hands with people with policies that save people.

[NKT No.154] Starving Children Are Innocent Victims
Seventeen-year-old Sang-hak went to a potato seed storage cave with his friends to steal potatoes. He asked his friends to be on the lookout and entered the storage, but he failed to come out. He had heard that it’s difficult to breath inside the storage due to poisonous vapor. Nevertheless, he thought that it would be okay if he grabs the potatoes and get out of the storage right away. That was a miscalculation. His dead body could only be recovered 15 days later. Sang-hak was tightly holding potatoes in both hands.

In the swamps along the Suhdoosoo River, frogs were decimated because people caught every one of them to eat. They couldn’t wait for the tadpoles to mature, so they scooped the tadpoles up in a mesh dipper. Then children died from tadpole poisoning. Now toads replaced the vanished frogs. The children that thought they could eat toad just like they ate frog after roasting died of toad poisoning. In Sambong, six friends together caught toads, ate them, and all six of them died overnight.
Fourteen-year-old Soo-myoung cried for a long time because he missed the old lady next door who was taking care of him and his sister after his own parents left them to earn some money. Yeon-shil’s grandma was like his own grandmother to him and his sister. Soo-myoung said he found the old lady dead when he went to her house to give her a few potatoes he kept for dinner in return for the chicken soup. The night before grandmother gave him chicken soup with some meat in it and he ate that delicious soup with his sister. Soo-myoung and Soo-jin could not stop crying because of the shock of losing someone they trusted and depended on.

What crimes did the children commit? Being born in a poor country and starving could be a crime? These children dying out of hunger need food now. I want to ask you: Should we help these children? Or should we not help them? The children committed no crime. Why should we sacrifice these children for the fight among adults and for the sake of unjustifiable ideological battle between the South and the North Korean governments?

Some say our information is exaggerated. Others say that there is no famine because their ability to survive has improved. We truly wish that is the case. We sincerely wish that what they say is right and our information is wrong. If what they are saying is true we won’t have to make a plea which nobody is paying attention to. However, we just cannot give up because we cannot ignore the heart-breaking images of Sang-hak, who died holding potatoes in both hands and Soo-myoung and Soo-jin, who will have to live with the memory of the chicken soup the old lady next door gave them. We will not stop our cry for help on behalf of these children until we can no long speak and shout even though our plea for help cannot be heard to the closed mind of the South and North Korean authorities.

Please save these innocent children. Even saving only one child would be worthwhile. Time is running out. These children cannot wait until food can be delivered from China and the United States of America. Please join our relief effort. The starving children need to be fed. The South and North Korean authorities should work together and save the children first. Please do not let the children pay for the crimes adults have committed. The starving children committed no crime.
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.

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 aid for them.
3) assessing human rights violations occurring in North Korea, informing international communities, and requesting that the North Korean government act to improve human rights and living conditions.

Also, Good Friends USA publishes the 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.

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