

## Are Koreans Ideological Victims Yet?

by Eui-Gak Hwang

Professor emeritus of economics, Korea University and  
Senior Research Professor of The International Centre  
for the Study of East Asian Development (ICSEAD),  
Japan

Working Paper Series Vol. 2008-15  
June 2008

The views expressed in this publication are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect those of the Institute.

No part of this article may be used reproduced in any manner whatsoever without written permission except in the case of brief quotations embodied in articles and reviews. For information, please write to the Centre.

# Are Koreans Ideological Victims Yet?

by Eui-Gak Hwang

## Abstract

It has been more than sixty years since Korea gained her independence in 1945. But the division of the peninsula between the North's communist system and the South's capitalist system has led people ideologically split. In North Korea, today, many hungry people are "*fighting for foods*" while facing very oppressive dictatorial government. Most of adult people are members of the communist party, whether voluntary or not. They can not publicly criticize the Dear Leader, who is now running the regime at a hide in radiation-free underground stronghold near Pyongyang. In the South, thousands of stomach-full dissidents are out in the streets "*fighting against foods*", namely the US beef imports, with red head bands and candle-lights in every hands. Whatever the cloak must be, it is a cover-up to turn over the right wing regime. People in both sides have been the victims of two alien conflicting ideologies for more than a half century. The resultant inflictions will fall eventually on Koreans, both ideological importers and blind followers.

Keywords: Political ideologies, North and South Korea, Kim Jong-II,

Lee Myung-Bak, Chuche idea, farming, humanitarian, US beef imports.

---

Professor emeritus of economics, Korea University, and Senior Research Professor of The International Centre for the Study of East Asian Development (ICSEAD), Japan  
Corresponding Author: 11-4 Otemachi, Kokurakita, Kitakyusyu, Fukuoka,

803-0814, Japan.

Email: [hwang@icsead.or.jp](mailto:hwang@icsead.or.jp)

## **1. The Division and Loss of Indigenous Identity**

The invisible fate worked to divide and to relocate innocent Korean people mostly regardless of their will between pro-communists camp and pro-capitalists group during the turmoil transition period of 1945-48 at the wake of the nation's independence from Japanese yoke of 36 years. National independence movement leaders had once fought hand in hand against Japanese occupation, but when the country gained independence the two groups began viviparously to break up for their respective political shares and interests in power. When the same brethren made an internecine struggle against one another on the account of different political ideologies and power game, they became ruthless and devoured one another. Hostility continued to pile up and no real reconciliation found any room between the two fratricidal enemies. Indeed, it has been impossible to reconcile the followers of capitalistic democracy with those followers of namely egalitarian communism in the evolving course of Korean history, just as is it impossible to mix fire and water.

From the independence joy in August, 1945 until the North red army's armed tanks rolling sounds awoke up the Seoulites in the early quiet Sunday morning of June 25, 1950, the southern brethren had never imagined, nor prepared, that its communist counterpart was so well organizing to cross the 38<sup>th</sup> line to liberate its poor people from the U.S. imperialist's followers in the south. The South had until then engaged only in endless political disputes in the course of experimenting the imported democratic system with no prior practical knowledge. Political terrors against opposition camps did often continue in both ways and general citizen's mounting discontents toward politicians became daily events. In such a situation neither the weak government nor infant military leaders had paid any alert or little concern to watch over the organized war preparation under way in the other side of the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel division line. In those days, many conscious intellectuals in the South began already to suspect the sustainability of the Seoul's immature democratic system in turmoil, thus inclining to turn their hearts in favor of the then seemingly efficient system in the controlled socialist north. This disgruntled social atmosphere contributed to pave the easy way for the communists to grasp the city of Seoul so quickly without strong inside resistance.

In no more than three days after communists overall attack, the heavily armed North soldiers could put the South's capital city completely under their feet with many welcoming citizens waving red flags along the streets. Many innocent citizens did not foreknow this would be the regrettable invitation of their miserable nightmare afterwards under communist ruling. Once red army controlled the city, the North's security officers would often visit houses after houses mostly during the nights in order not only to search for all man-powers either to mobilize to the front line or to reconstruct the bombed Han-river bridge and other bridges and roads but also to confiscate food and valuable household goods such as sleeping blankets with US brand label.

All household goods made by American reactionary imperialists were collected by the newly arrived leftists, but their disposition was never known. Whenever they visited to search for a house, they pretended very gentle with comforting words to the host families. But after their visit, families were only left without grains while adult men, young or old in the family, if found, were unexceptionally forced to drag away. They used even to pierce the room roof with their rifle-edge knife, searching for anyone hid there. Young children and women had daily to pick up edible grasses or something from outskirts lands and hills so as to fill up their hungry stomach. I was 10 years old at the start of Korean War and still remember how hungry I was. One day my mother brought home nine sweet potatoes from somewhere in early morning of a day in mid-August (according to news report from hidden radio, the pushing and pushed fights continued then cross over the Rack-dong River near Daegu region). When she was boiling them, I thought they would be on our family special breakfast menu. My guess went wrong. She made three sweet potatoes as a bundle each and told me to sell them to passerby by displaying on a piece of old newspaper in the street corner. There were also a few other sellers of the same products in the street. Regardless of my competitors in this market, the 10 years old hungry boy could not tolerate the allurements and surrendered himself by eating up one out of each bundle consisting of three, reducing to each bundle of two sweet potatoes. Until the twilight shade, no passerby showed any mind of sympathy to buy the smaller potato bundle (as compared to other seller's offer) from me. So eventually the unsold three bundles each now having two

potatoes were distributed for the mouths of other members in the family, frustrating a poor housewife's naive calculation to raise some extra income from this potato business. During the three years (1950-53) of fratricidal war, every Korean was bereft without exceptions with the war disasters, losses of loved ones and neighbors and shrunken stomach. The remnant had to go through the pains and tears of serious famine doubled with dry weather with no rain drops for the three war years.

Most innocent Koreans, north and south, just struggled to survive only without questioning seriously why the nation was swirled into war game. Nor did grassroots barely concern to understand the evils hidden in those few elite's ideological faiths and their attributes that would lead to harbor enmity and run very high to arouse action to eliminate one another.

The bullets the ideological leaders dissipate are of course ideologically innocent and ideologically indifferent people. The ideologically brain-washed leaders, yesterday or today, are usually ignorant and uncouth in sacrificing grassroots people for the sake of earning their political objectives. They know how well to cover their real hearts with false patriotism, concealed love for people who bite their baits. The events that brought war between two groups misguided by ideologically divorced leaders but for the same history, culture and ethnic foundation tell that the leading elite class were more important (alternatively rather ego-centered) in determining the live-and-die path than the people. This simplified hasty conclusion is very contrary to what Bruce Cumings' quote of the following: "*The people were usually more important than the leaders. The deeper I have excavated, the more I have satisfied myself that the best was underneath, in the obscure depths. And I have realized that it is quite wrong to take these brilliant and powerful talkers, who expressed the thought of the masses, for the sole actors in the drama. They were given the impulse by others much more than they gave it to themselves. The principal actor is the people*" (Michelet).<sup>1</sup> Of course, the role and influence of actors would alter circumstantially depending upon whether it is socialistic theater or democratic theater.

The three years of bloody conflict left millions of casualties (deaths, wounded, and

---

<sup>1</sup> Bruce Cumings, *The Origins of the Korean War, Volume II, The Roaring of the Contract 1947-1950* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990), p.237.

missing), devastated economies, north and south alike, but yet unsolved battlefields of almost the same size of land division as before the war under a 1953 truce agreement, Opposing political ideologies, along with their respectively different economic systems, have henceforth created further antagonistic hostility and feelings of bitter enmity between the two halves of the same country.<sup>2</sup>

## **2. Kim Il-Sung's Miscalculation and the After Years**

The North leader, Kim Il-Sung was later reported to have regretted that he invaded into the south, because his hasty miscalculation contributed only to fail in winning the support of people in the south.<sup>3</sup> Unless the war had occurred, the south could have fallen sooner or later under his control without so much blood. Until the war broke out in 1950, there were still several leftist guerrilla units along with thousands of additional supporters in the south. The rampant corruption and revelry, unstable politics, endless stripes, vicious circle of poverty with mounting unemployment, and pro-leftist sentiments in the south were signaling to toll the death of the south system. However, the war brought tremendous dislocation of leftist supporters from the south among all others. The end of the war provided the south regime with good excuse to impose strong anti-communist wipe-outs and to tighten its political security; People had also learned a good lesson about many bad shades and lies of communism while north communists occupied the south. Along with civilian incompetence, social instability and people's hope for better economy made a pave for the south military regimes to bud and bloom to make the most use of anti-communist measures in exercising political objectives. Under the banner of cracking down leftist elements, the power group could easily control political dissentients, not to speak of suppressing human rights of

---

<sup>2</sup>Eui-Gak Hwang, *The Korean Economies: A Comparison of North and South* (Clarendon Press. Oxford, 1993) p.23

<sup>3</sup> However, the origins of the war have until recently been a matter of dispute. Officially North Korea has insisted that the US imperialists started the war, but hearsay backed by various documents from the Soviet archives showed that in 1949 and early 1950 Kim implored Stalin repeatedly to authorize an invasion of the South. The Kim's regret words are also based on hearsay circulated among North defectors and North Korean watchers in the south.

opposing forces in the society. The military regimes had in fact implemented their economic policies more efficiently and forcefully than any alternative civilian government would do. But they had produced countless dissentients for more than a quarter century ever since the general Park Chung-Hee seized power with a group of young Turks' coup in 1961. They could make a big success in seizing power and winning majority peoples' support under the fresh slogan for "the elimination of social unjustness, corruption and vicious circle of poverty"

The Korean War and history path followed by a quarter of strong military culture in the south have resulted in the extreme division of "thought and faith" between "the before and mid-war generation" and "the young generation born after the 1960's". This division is a continuing source of generational and cultural clash. But this diversity of thought and life style in the south is believed, if looked from positive angle, to greatly attributing to maturing democratic mode of the society, though the between-class conflicts are sometimes suspected to matter to the speed of economic and social take-off tempo. Good or bad, all this social evolution has been attributed to the past history through which generation after generation has accumulated various experience-based knowledge and cognition of conflicting ideological systems. During the last three decades, South Korea has achieved a remarkable economic success surging to the 12<sup>th</sup> or 13<sup>th</sup> rank of world economic strength order in 2008 with no major natural resources but for about 45 million populations in a small land area of 98,190 square meters, slightly larger than Indiana of the United States. This miracle transition from "hunger to affluence" could be possible largely based on private incentive-oriented free market economic system in South Korea. This open economic system has been supplemented by the past experiences of hardships, pains and tears that all walks of people have gone through. This does not of course rule out that macro-economic achievement does not involve any unrighteousness, unjustness, or other social dark aspects. Not at all. There are mounting problems such as widening income and wealth disparity, moral and ethical depravity, and much human derailment in South Korea as in other market economies. But anyone can freely choose a decent life as long as he or she is willing to work and to abide by law. This does not mean, as already briefly mentioned above that there have been no political and human right suppression in the South. Many

children and descendants of those who were classified as ideologically impure elements before and after the Korean War had been systematically excluded from the employment in public organizations or social activities. Through a prolonged time of hardship and distress under right wing regimes, they sought to harbor for jobs mostly in schools and publishing houses, heaping hardened hatred upon hatred against the ruling conservatives. In schools, particularly elementary and junior high schools, those teachers have formed an alliance with outside discontent forces and persistently propagated both anti-government and anti-American brainwash to sensitive young pupils. During the 1980s and 1990s when the new refloating wave of democracy set in the South, these groups began to float up on the surface of all parts of the South, shaking the country with their crimson head bands and jackets in much more different mode and environment than ever before. Riding on their full supports, two new liberal regimes of both Kim Dae-Jung and Roh Moo-Hyun could ground in consecutively grasping powers in the South for exactly 10 years from 1997. This period is often now called a decade insufflated widely by would-be leftist forces that came out in the sun.

The 17<sup>th</sup> President Lee Myung-Bak (inaugurated on 25 February, 2008) confessed that “the past 10 years influences of former two Presidents (Kim Dae-Jung and Roh Moo-Hyun) are too big across the landscape of the South”. The remark was made when he met news reporters (May15, 2008) on the issue of Korea-US FTA ratification. He expressed his deep concern on the ever mounting worrisome number of candle-carrying street demonstrators in fierce protests against the unrealized risks of downy beef imports from the United States. President Lee made a special address to the people on May 22, 2008 that he is “very sorry” for having failed in reflecting fully the wide spectrum of public opinion in the process of his policy decision on the beef imports, and assured that his government would humbly do it’s utmost to enhancing the public health. This series of events burst out of US beef imports reflects not only that there has greatly improved the freedom of speeches and organized protests, but also the lowered position of power in the South. As such it appears sometimes in mud, but the democratic system has been moving forward with higher per capita “mean income” from a less than 80 U.S. dollars in early 1960s to above 20,000 U.S. dollars in 2007, in spite that “income standard deviation” enlarged in due course. In the South, political ideology has

sometimes beefed up many innocent victims, but in due course, human right and democratic freedom has grown greatly along with improved income and wellbeing of the people as a whole.

On the other side of the peninsula, the Marxist brethren have been above all missing the market incentive motives in every aspects of economic life. The north Hermit Kingdom appears today to come near to the no-outlet corridor. There are reports on mass starvation and death of grassroots reaching to about three million in numbers as of mid-2008, due to the shortages of food, medicine, and other basic necessities. What a grievous victim of the deceiving ideology which has assured repeatedly the people with fake promise on “white rice”, “meat soup”, “tile-roof house”, and “silk clothes”, made firstly by Kim Il-Sung back from November, 1962, the second year of the North’s First Seven Year Plan. We need somewhat to retrospect the past course of the communist regime in the North.

### **3. Brief Retrospect on the North *Chuche* Hermit Kingdom**

In the North, Kim Il-Sung, who was a 33-year old guerrilla commander when he seized power with the support of the Soviet army in 1945, had effectively created a highly centralized system that accorded him unlimited power. He had systematically purged his political opponents. He had fully cultivated his power to generate a formidable cult of personality for himself and to establish a communistic monarchy kingdom which could pave a way of making his son Kim Jong-Il as his heir from early 1970s. While following a Stalinist control line, he had distanced himself from Marx-Engels’ intrinsic philosophy. In other word, he was a pedigree-centered impure socialist. Most orthodox communists had to compromise with this new hybrid communist ruler Kim Il-Sung and his dear son Kim Jong-Il only if for survival in the North. Otherwise they had either to go under political surface or to defect the North with the great cost and life risk of the remnant of their families.<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>4</sup> The most sensational defection of the high-level insider from the North to the South was the 1997 case of Hwang Jang-Yop who was speaker of the Supreme People’s Assembly from 1972 to 1984. He had

But in the early two decades, the North could successfully mobilize people to effectively rebuild the North Korean economy which had quite formidable heavy industrial bases along with abundant coal and hydroelectric resources. The socialistic approach of running the economy had the North's per capita income ahead of that of the South until the end of 1974.

The people's workers had demonstrated their eagerness for production in the early stage of the socialist economy. The hard working culture was systematically driven by collective slogan and pushing encouragement for the quick construction of a great socialist paradise. But the working ethics began gradually to erode over time as workers were awakening to the system that would principally equalize all at the expense of incentives.<sup>5</sup> They began to learn how to meet the daily or monthly top-down targets of production. The quantity targets could be less hardly accomplished when they attended less concern about the quality aspects of what they were producing. In the state of missing ownership, state control functions had crucially expanded in every production fields, but only with diminishing efficiency and effects. Everybody also came to know that "one who is today the leader may be tomorrow the one receiving leadership" in the communist society. In such circumstances, if leader fail to monitor his or her subordinates effectively, as with the principal-agent problem, the leader and subordinates as well may be monitored by pressures from within their own organ. This leads to mounting mutual disbelief. Thus, the autarky economy lacking humanly trust and confidence one another as a whole began to erode. Indeed, the North Korea has explosively lagged behind the economy of the South ever since the turn of mid-1970s.

Under the slogan of 'communist' economic construction, North Korea had aimed at building a self-reliant economy under a central planning and management.

---

educated Kim Jong-Il at Kim Il Sung University in Pyongyang in which he was appointed president of the university in 1965, the year after the Dear Leader graduated. Hwang was principal authority on *Juche Idea*, which became the official credo of the DPRK in the 1972 constitution. But Hwang's world began to erode when an article in *Nodong Sinmun* (official newspaper) attacked "careerists and conspirators (who) outwardly pretend to uphold the leader and be faithful to the revolutionary cause while seeking another dream inwardly and making conspiracies behind the scenes". Being certain it was aimed at him, he chose in Beijing to defect Pyongyang on his way back after delivering the main address at a Cho Chongryun (pro-North resident's association) symposium in Japan in early February 1997.

<sup>5</sup> In 1947, Kim Il-Sung borrowed Lenin's Biblical principle that "he that does not work, neither shall he eat". But the socialist principle, "that from each according to their ability, to each according to their work", had not been practically challenged for application in the North.

After observing the ideological and border dispute (clash) between the post-Stalinist Soviet Union and Mao's China in 1953-55, Kim Il-Sung sought to exercise autonomy by keeping an equal distance between the then Soviet Union and China. North Korea has advanced persistently the '*chuche idea*' (self-reliance doctrine) as her guiding ideology in politics, economy, and military after Kim Il-Sung's first initiative remark at the Workers' Party Central Committee in 1955. It became the principle guideline in the North's new constitution promulgated in December 1972, with the 'Marxist-Leninist philosophy' as a supporting pillar. Kim Jung-Il, son and heir-designate, enriched further the *chuche idea* as a tool for fostering his political position in the power transition that started since 1972. As in other communist economies, materials and labors are the means of production owned collectively by the people in the form of 'all-people ownership'. Paradoxically, individual workers like physical inputs are nothing but means and tools of production owned by the state (or party), which in vague communist theory is geared to serve 'the promotion of the material well-being of the masses'. The reality has, in turn, given 'the state being represented successively by the Greater Leader and Dearer Leader' *carte blanche* overridden the grass-roots. As such, the helpless masses are being consumed as altar sacrifices not only to serve for the great father-land but also to exalt the state ideology.

#### **4. Different Roads**

With no exceptions, the pronounced goal of political leaders in every society would aim to help people enjoy higher income and well-being with the provision of individual dignity and freedom. Very often, though, in the primitive stage of economic growth, the priority on higher material well-being would precede over individual human right and freedom. Given the proposition, the approaches to higher material well-being might deviate from one another in different ideological systems. One major difference between the market economy (South Korea) and the socialist system (North Korea) lies in the decision-making criterion as to 'what', 'how', and 'for whom' to produce. In deciding what to produce, consumer preference revealed by market demand plays a very crucial role in the market-oriented economy, while social preference valued by the

ruling leaders dominates in the command economy.<sup>6</sup> In North Korea, the priorities of production has been ranked down from heavy-industrial (military-related) and public goods, producers' goods, light industry goods, and lastly consumer goods. Consumer preferences were largely placed in the tail of the menu table for the sake of heavy industrial and military sectors in most socialist economies from the Stalinist period. Such discriminative policy prevailed until the socialist bloc came to dissolve at the wake of the fall of Soviet Union in 1989-90. North Korea was but exception. The trend has not fundamentally changed yet in North Korea as the sustained ruling class and their mind-sets have kept intact. On the other hand, the South capitalists moved from the development of light and consumer industries to capital intensive industrial policy as the economy advanced to the higher stage of development. The South leaders believed from the beginning that an international system of exchange would solve everyone's problems in the long run, though they understood that some domestic infant industrial bases needed protection in early pre-takeoff stage. Unlike the South, however, the North persistently pursued its self-reliant policy with focal emphasis on enhancing its formidable heavy industrial complexes and energy sources with which it started formerly. As time passed, the independent North economy began to reveal seriously the economic and technological backwardness in less than two decades. The self-reliant doctrine faced mounting constraints in its "socialistic accumulation". None the less, the resources for expanding human technocrats became severely limited, apart from urging the "people's workers" to unite and to tighten their belts for their great father-land and Greater Leader. It was natural outcome in that hybrid regime, where overnight people became proletarian cadres, workers, or technicians, coming overwhelmingly from the poor peasants and bottom classes in the course of new birth of the revolutionary communist state. The proletarian cadres had ruthlessly purged out the remnants of intellectual technocrats as reactionary elements over an extended period before and after Korean War. All such reckless politics and autarky in North Korea turned out to authentically be the sources of the economy's dilemma vividly aggravating from mid-1970s. The economic battle situation between the North and South turned around in 1975-76 to show the capitalistic open market economy run ahead of the autarkic self-

---

<sup>6</sup> Eui-Gak Hwang, *ibid.* p.29.

reliant one.<sup>7</sup>

Per capita income evaluated at North's official trade exchange rate was about 175 U.S dollars in 1960, and rose to about 750 U.S. dollars in 1975, but is now estimated around 800 U.S. dollars in 2008. The estimates of per capita income depends, of course, on several key factors like exchange rates applied, output accounting methods different in each systems, as well as purchasing power of a unit of nominal income in the respective economies, admitting the functions of money to differ completely between market-oriented economy and self-sufficiency seeking socialist economy.<sup>8</sup>

## **5. Mass Starvation under Plenary Power Elites**

It is apparent that the North *chuche* economy has been being trapped in short food supply due to not only system-made mistakes but also continued punishing weather conditions. In particular, the hardships have been mainly attributed to the out-of-order functioning of the socialist system since the early 1990s. Instead of “white rice and meat soup”, many people in the North are known not to have had something enough to fill their hungry stomach. According to recent reports leaked out of the North, many hungry people are seeking to cross the border into China to sell their labor and body in exchange of foods. The annual shortage of food has amounted to between 2.5 million tons and 1.5 million tons depending on each year during the period of 1990-2007. North Korea's minimum demand for grains is approximated to about 7.0 million ton annually for both human consumption (about 5.5 million ton) and animal feed and industrial use. In more detail, North Korea minimum food requirement for human consumption in 1995/96 was about 5,145 thousand ton, but only 4,563 thousand ton was available for total 21,685 thousand of population, of which domestic production accounted for 3,451 thousand ton, while 962 thousand ton and 150 thousand ton were supplied from foreign sources (including China) and South Korea respectively. In 2005/06, 23,165 thousand

---

<sup>7</sup> See Eui-Gak Hwang (1993), *ibid*, tables 3.11(a) and 3.11(b), given in pages 121-122, for the per-capita GNP estimates of both North Korea, 1946-1990 and South Korea, 1953-1990.

<sup>8</sup> See Eui-Gak Hwang (1993), *ibid*, pp.60-62 on the functions of money in North Korea and also refer to Eui-Gak Hwang (1984), *Monetary Economics* (Kyung-Sae Won Publishing Co.) in Korean.

people needed minimum amount of 5,496 million ton of grains which met barely with 4,540 thousand ton of domestic production, 450 thousand ton from foreign import and 500 thousand ton from South Korea. In the latter example, supply and demand was marginally balanced.

However, the problem lied in the reality that total supply was not equally distributed to all people. The ruling power class and military had taken as usual the large share, leaving the common people still starved unless they could secure additional food through all possible means and routs within or outside the country. In short supply society, corruption and black markets would without exception be rampant, resulting in wide disparity in living standard to curl up the so-called egalitarian ideology. Brutal political suppression and economic hardships have so far produced thousands of dissidents and defectors from the North, whose numbers are rising greatly in recent years. Even discontent high officers and military personnel are increasingly joining in the exodus, which surely signals the upcoming of collapsing regime in North Korea. So far, North Korea has tried to strictly control news and mass media to keep people from awakening about the prosperous South. But various evidence of humanitarian aid from the South and hearsays on the economic success south of the truce line are known widely spread among populace. The leaders in the North perhaps overlooked the Korean old saying, that is, “a footless word can travel 1000 li (240 km) over night”.

## **6. For Whom the Mourning Bell Tolls?**

The North leaders had probably not “calculated” the would-be eventual end-stop when they allowed the South brethren to invest for tourism at Mt. Kumgang and later for Kaesung Special Economic Zone. They are blind to trade their strongholds of self-reliant system with dollars, without fully understanding that “money will matter to override their closed system”. Money from capitalistic markets will sooner or later shake off the dull communist society. If otherwise, the self-reliant system will come to self-collapse within itself either due to starveling epidemics or mass revolts.

The current ruler Kim Jong-II, was de-factor power practice from 1972 according to

Hwang Jang-Yop's testimony, but was officially designated as his father's successor in 1980, assuming a growing political and managerial role until Kim Il-Sung's death in July 1994. Having deteriorated his country's economy due to mismanagement, he has tacitly gambled to secure international economic aid while developing long-range missiles and nuclear program for his prodigious bargain sticks ever since the mid-1990s. Though, this outwardly irrational gamble may save him to stay longer in power as U.S. George Bush administration appears to somewhat enjoy to play with Kim at the Six-Party Talks (involving North Korea, China, Japan, Russia, South Korea, and the US, that began in August 2003) against its early strong rhetoric. In rhetoric, George Bush started very strong against Kim's toy of military provocations, but in reality he appears seemingly interested in prolonging Kim's regime for some undisclosed cause.

But it is very likely that Kim Jong-Il's policy of ostensible diplomatic and economic "self-reliance" coupled with his increasingly oppressive and draconian ruling will shorten his fate and his regime. It is not possible to predict about the sure way how North Korea would falter and fall.

North's Kim Jong-Il was reported to express his deep impression and surprise at the cataclysmic wonderful changes of Shanghai, Guangzhou and Beijing when he visited China in 2005. But the North Leader seems yet not being certain if his small and heavily closed poor economy can follow the Chinese model based on both wide openness and market-oriented incentives. Openness will bring in "fresh air with lot of flies", but Kim is afraid that he can be no longer capable to "catch and kill those flies"<sup>9</sup>. Can he dare otherwise to follow the path of Mikhail Gorbachev's "perestroika and glasnost" whose ideology gave way to pragmatism and dramatic change in the Soviet Union in 1989? Probably the only option for the Kim family to take is to keep and to prolong the "status quo", strengthening his teams' security. Regardless whether the Democratic People's Republic of Korea wants to change or not, however, the shade is already approaching toward the fall of the North regime. Kim may be lucky only if he can avoid the way the decades-long Romania dictator Nicoale CEAUSESCU was

---

<sup>9</sup> This is one of famous notes made by Deng Xiaoping in 1979. Deng said that if China opened its door to outside world, "many capital and new technology" ('fresh air') would flow into China but with "many capitalistic west's negative cultures and political elements" ('flies'). He suggested "flies" could be caught after "fresh air" was introduced. Another famous Deng's analects is "If a cat catches mice, what does it matter if it's black or white?", which is, "Don't ask whether a policy is socialist, ask whether it works".

overthrown and executed in late 1989.

## 7. The Shelter for Coward Leaders

According to a newspaper interview with a defected high ranking North Korean general (three stars) called Mr. Ahn Young-Chul (pseudo-nym), Kim Jong-Il has been spending most of his time in a radiation-free stronghold, specially constructed two-story underground command post with advanced equipments in two dozens of office rooms of total space of about 200 square meters<sup>10</sup>. The bunker named as “Chul-Bong-Kak (meaning *iron-hill-palace*)” is believed to locate at about 15km north-east from the Kim Il-Sung Square in Pyongyang city”. This bunker is connected with about 80km underground tunnel to the Nampo port in the west coast. His daily hide in the bunker began just after he was first informed of the United States-led invasion on Iraq in March 2003. Kim Jong-Il is being obsessed with the fear of the US decapitating his regime. To protect his own and his followers’ safety, he has claimed the toils and hungers of numerous people for constructing this palace-like fortress.

Just as the innocent people have been victims of ideological organ and chronic economic problems, so are the North leaders also being victimized in the World ideological conflicts and their policy failure? As compared to the leaders’ soft-landing in most capitalist ideology camps, the communist dictatorial leaders are unsure about their end days which would be paid off by their deeds.

The North Kim Jong-Il, born in February 1942, is now known not physically and mentally health. Kim Jong-Il, chairman of the National Defense Commission, is centered along with *the Kim Jong-Il military operation core members* which encompass Kim Du-Nam, operation head, Cho Myung-Rok, political bureau chief of the Supreme Command Headquarter, Kim Yong-Chun, command-in-chief of People’s Army, Kim Myung-Sup, operation head of DPRK Workers Party (KWP), and about 120 leaders of

---

<sup>10</sup> The first story on the defection of Mr. Ahn, who made the second defection case of high ranking North Korean officer following Hwang Jang-Eup in 1998, was first reported in a Japanese monthly magazine “GENDAI (Contemporary)”, June, 2003. A Korean internet newspaper, *The Independence* had an exclusive interview recently with this defector and reported the details on the bunker constructs as well as North Korea’s military organization, on May 21, 2008.

both the People's Armed Forces and the KWP.

## **8. Who will likely take over after Kim Jong-II?**

As of mid-2008, the notable figure in North Korea is General Kim Du-Nam who is the third son of Kim Yong-Nam, president of Supreme People's Assembly (SPA). He is now 'general superintendent' of the People's Army, second only to Kim Jong-II in the North power hierarchy.

If something happens to Dear Leader, it is likely for this man to take over the interim period supreme power post in DPRK. It is not known much about his personal favors or positions on neighboring nations. The question here is how longer the North political cadets can sustain their status quo yet sticking to their bigotry *chuche ideology* in every aspects of the state management. Unless the North is to undertake reforming its system including the so-called *chuche farming*, it appears unlikely that the North can save its thousands of people from on-going current starvation and male nutrition dilemma. The only sure key for the North Korea to get out of its serious economic setbacks is to reform its stubborn and closed collective economic system into well guided incentive-driven economy, learning from the lesson that Deng Xiaoping had bravely adopted for China since 1978. In fact, Kim Jong-II could have adopted the similar course of the early Chinese economic reform by criticizing the Greater Leader's past policy failures immediately after his father Kim Il-Sung's death in 1994<sup>11</sup>. He was then a coward and he is still not a true egalitarian communist in that he is afraid of importing any reform (perestroika) and opening (glasnost) policy which he fears might turn over his power structure and life<sup>12</sup>. Having been cowards, he and his followers are now increasingly facing intestine intolerance which will be no longer in their control capacity. As of summer 2008, the food shortage stricken North Korea is known to use the humanitarian food aids from outside world mostly to feed its cadets and residents in

---

<sup>11</sup> I wrote a newspaper article (Dong-A Ilbo, September 12, 1994) suggesting that Kim Jong-II could be the North Korean successful leader like the Chinese Deng Xiaoping if he bravely differentiated himself from his father. .

<sup>12</sup> Kim Jong-II made it clear that the North will not accept both reform and open policy when the former South Korean President Roh Moo-Hyun visited him in Pyongyang in October 2007.

Pyongyang city and its neighborhood prefectures, and military forces, while leaving thousands of grass-roots to remain at the state of nearly “starved”.

In concluding, North Korea’s food needs are very likely to continue increasingly insatiable under its on-going *chuche farming*. The hungry people who are victims of the communist *chuche ideology* will *fight for* foods if not to perish inevitably. Ironically, thousands of *ideologically split and stomach full* people in the South are fighting in summer 2008 against Lee Myung-Bak regime with candle lights each in their hands under the cloak of opposing *the beef imports* from the United States. It is really a regrettable reality that the homogeneous ethnic people in the Korean peninsula have been divided long and made the victims of “either too less or too much food” under those conflicting ideologies. The victimized people are victimizing themselves with no much regard to whichever camps they are destined to belong. The resultant inflictions will fall eventually on both ideological offenders and sufferers alike.

*You shall hear of wars and rumors of wars, but see to it that you are not alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come. Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in various places. All these are the beginning of birth pains.*

*-Matt.24:6,7,8.*