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Even Half of transplanting of rice seedling in Wangjaesan Farm Not Yet Finished

Wangjaesan farm in Onsung County, North Hamgyong Province is famous for its good farming not only in the province but also nationwide. Even Kim Il-Sung planned to visit and have a look at the farm during his life. However, the farming is getting worse every year. As of June 3 of this year, they haven't finished even half of transplanting rice seedling. From the time when plowing began, the farmers have been busy irrigating, harrowing, and weeding the banks around rice fields. There has been a shortage of workers and farm machines, but the greatest problem was that they couldn't irrigate the rice fields at the proper time. The county party had mobilized workers for the transplanting from workplaces and public enterprises, but the work progressed slowly. Delays stemmed from the low rate of mobilization from local businesses and public enterprises. With so few workers reporting to the farm, productivity has fallen. The county party was busy preparing for ways to enervate the work environment, notably by bringing business leaders from public enterprises together to have the 'Fight for Ideology meeting' until late at night for two days.

[Special Report]

Increasingly Open and Candid Lectures on Agriculture for the Officials and the Public

In April 2008, the North Korean government issued a report nationwide on the farming conditions of the country. One official said that he received a tremendous shock when he saw the report for the first time. According to the official, although many government reports have been issued in North Korea since the founding of the country, there has been no reports as open and candid as this one. The official said that he believed the Central Department of Propaganda and Agitation (중앙선전선동부) was the agency that issued the report, and went on to say that he was able to surmise just how serious the current conditions are after reading the report. He went on to say that the report shows that "the government already anticipated that people would die from starvation in the spring, and that this lecture was devised in order to enhance the internal congruency. The report contains candid and open references to the current situation's unprecedented nature. The 'North Korea TODAY' will present the government report entitled "Everyone Needs to Work Together to Ensure a Good Harvest" in the next five issues.

[Special Report Series 3]

“Everyone Needs to Contribute to Ensure a Productive Harvest this Year”

Original Lecture Material

To Increase Grain Production this Year, the Duties of the Officials Must be Increased

The role of the workers is especially important in ensuring a good crop this year. The officials should consider the farming work as part of the revolution and set themselves as the model for others to follow. The situation of the particular farm is shown from the attitudes and behaviour

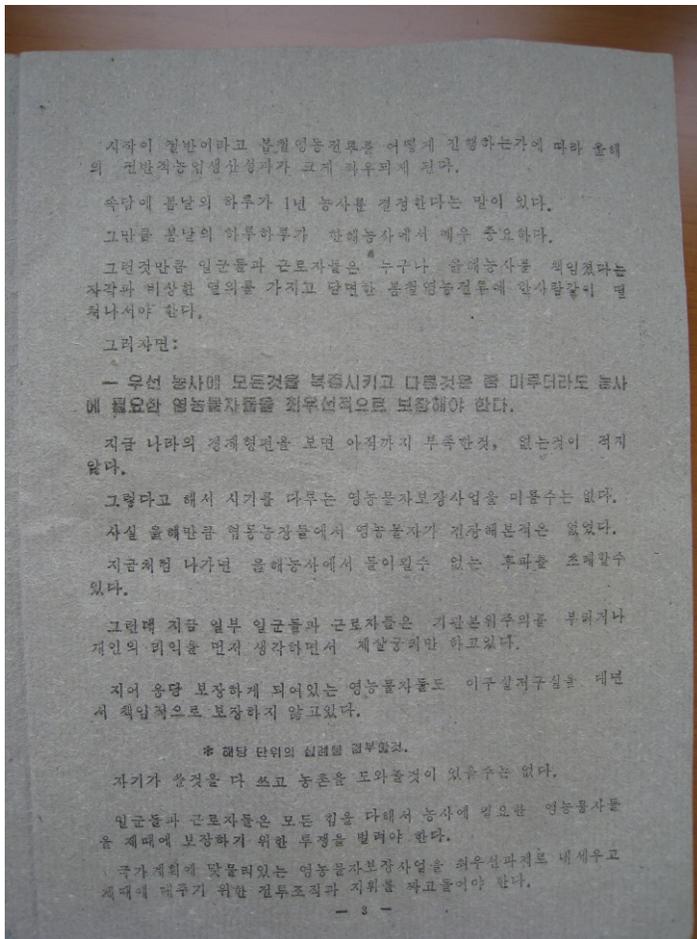


Photo 1. Original copy of the Lecture material for the officials

from the farm workers. All officials should, therefore, be focused and obeying all matters to farming work at all times. Farm workers lives have to be settled in

their own farms, thus, their well-being have to be looked after in order to concentrate on the farm work. Particularly, the officials have to take a careful work on the economic matters of the area for the workers to work in the farm without disturbances.

In the previous season, there were some officials who have allowed too many social issues for the workers to deal with, that affected the total yield of grain production last year and made farm worker's life more difficult.

(add current cases from the individual farms)

This is the reason that the party continuously emphasis not to have all the social issues to be dealt with the people otherwise this will result in confusion and interrupting farm workers work on the cultivation. The officials should do their utmost to perform their best to ensure what kind of social issues are obstacking the farm workers from concentrating on their work and try to lift such issues.

“Make the lifestyles of farmers secure”,

Recognition of the Food Shortage Suffered by Farmers

The third policy currently promulgated by the North Korean government says that “To help farmers, we must promote work that is appropriate to them so that they can give their undivided attention to their farmwork.” Prior to this revealing this specific policy, the government stressed the importance of securing farming goods and the efforts of the workers in order to solve the current food crisis. Outside of these two factors, the third most important goal is to make the lifestyles of farmers secure and stable.

This is the first time that the government has expressed this view and shown an interest in the stability of farmers' lifestyles in one of its nationwide reports. During the Arduous March of the mid-1990's, when large numbers of people were starving to death, there was never a single report issued that expressed this view. Of course, this may be due in part to the fact that more laborers than farmers were affected during the first Arduous March, but this illustrates just how pressing this matter currently is to the government.

According to one official who is an expert on these governmental reports, “Just by looking at this example, we can see how serious the current food shortage is. Though it is not expressly written that farmers are starving to death, I can clearly see the implicit message. This report was written before there was a great increase in the number of people who starved to death, but the fact that the government wrote this report before this fact means that the government already admits that the start of a great increase in

the number of deaths has begun.”

The official went on to say “North Korea’s problems were all handed over to farmers to solve” this is an unprecedented statement. The official said that in reality, the report reveals just how much North Korea’s problems were handed over to the farmers, but also, just how dire the lifestyle of farmers currently is.” However, it will prove different to suddenly put an end to the many different social problems that were given to farmers to solve.

Solution to the Farmers’ Food Shortage; Beyond the Capabilities of the Government

The North Korean government expressed its interest in the welfare of farmers for the first time ever in the nationwide report it recently issued. The farmers, who had hitherto never received any attention, should be moved by this fact alone. However, the farmers are only receiving this attention because they are in such a dire situation

“Try to restore stability to the lives of the farmers, and don’t raise the social issues” is certainly a strong statement, but a fundamental plan to do this has not been specified and is unclear. How ordinary laborers will accomplish this goal when even the government was not able to do so is difficult to ascertain just by reading this declaration. The only thing that can be gleaned from the declaration for certain is that the government formally has requested that cooperation from all levels are needed in order to resolve the food shortages.

This is not a sign of the government’s lack of will in trying to address this problem, but rather, an indication of the size and scope of the problems currently faced by farmers, as well as a sign that the current problems are beyond the capabilities of the government to solve. An official of the central party said that, “there is no things like fertilizer or farming materials such as plastic sheets. The food supply has already reached the bottom. If food aid does not come in from other countries, it will be impossible to avoid deaths from starvation during the farm hardship period.” The official went on and said that “all the workers will have to tighten their belts and save farm production. From this, it is clear just how limited the North Korean government’s options are.

Setting fire to his brother’s house in a fit of anger

At the end of last May, there was a fire at the house of a manager of a goods supply office in Sinuiju, killing one and leaving two severely burned. This incident turned out to be an accidental fire set by the manager’s younger brother. The younger brother had been experiencing difficulty in finding food, so he went to his brother’s house to borrow some money and food, but played cat and mouse with his sister-in-law instead. He had run out of food and couldn’t afford to feed his children even a bowl of rice soup. Ashamed to ask his brother, he still went to his house to borrow some corn. However, far from receiving corn, he was scolded by his sister-in-law. From the sister-in-law’s perspective, she

couldn't be kind to him because he came to her house as often as if it was his own house and asked her to give him this and that. The younger brother, angered by his relatives' response, lost his temper and set fire to his brother's house. It happened in an instant. The younger brother, crazed and breaking furniture in the house, couldn't escape from the fire and burned to death. His brother and sister-in-law escaped the fire but were burned and are in the hospital. Their neighbors who witnessed this accident felt sorry, saying "It seems that people are driven to extremities and become insane." Kim Dong-hyun, age 29, worried that people have become insensitive due to the shortage of food, saying "Such an accident occurs anywhere. For example, more than one bloody fight happens in a parking place where I work, and it is a most tragic sight."

Breaking into a Neighbor's Home Results in Murder

On May 21, a murder case of dismemberment was reported to the station of Mankyongdae District in Pyongyang. The culprit, coveting his neighbor's property, committed this brutal murder unintentionally while the man of the house was away. Assuming no one was home, he broke into his neighbor's house, but upon facing the woman of the house, he committed the first murder. Afterwards, he heard her middle school-age daughter calling her mom, so he committed his second murder. He dismembered the dead, left pieces of their bodies in the bathroom, and ran away. The daughter's teacher, worried about her absence, visited the house and reported the crime to the police. The investigation revealed the neighbor's crime, and the police caught him quickly. It was revealed that the culprit stole many possessions in addition to 500 US dollars. The neighbors were aghast at the news and said in resentment, "If money was the matter, he could have only taken money, but why did he take people's lives?"

Committing Murder while Persuading Absentees to Come to Work

52-year-old Choi Byong-chul, Company Commander of a coal mine in Hamju County of South Hamkyong Province received criticism at a meeting from the Secretary of the party, The Secretary described him as incompetent as well as irresponsible in business, due to his inability to raise attendance in his workplace. Having been warned that unless the problem is fixed he is going to be severely punished, he went out to visit many absentees. Going from this house to that house, he begged people and even tried to force them into coming to work, but people remained the same, mired in their own struggling situations.

On May 28, Commander Choi visited Jo Il-kwon, a 34-year-old man. Mr. Choi asked Mr. Jo, "How come you are absent from work when we are supposed to take the initiatives in building a country of strength and power?" Mr. Jo replied that he has to take care of his wife suffering from acute pyelitis that she got right after giving birth to a baby. He also explained that he cannot go to work because in addition to looking after all of the house work by himself, he must prepare medicine for his wife, medicine which he cannot afford. He is also having a difficult time finding enough food to feed his family. However, as Mr. Choi unwaveringly kept telling him to come to work, their conversations turned into a loud argument. Commander Choi condemned Mr. Jo for his excuses, and Mr. Jo, feeling so humiliated, grabbed Mr. Choi by the collar and threw him to the ground. Mr. Choi, flung to the ground, got so infuriated that he hit Mr. Jo on the

head with a nearby shovel. Mr. Jo, unable to dodge the blow, was killed on the spot. Upon seeing Mr. Jo's death, Commander Choi was aghast. People who were watching the fight gaped at what had just happened.

Broken Hearted over Discrimination against My Poverty-Stricken Country

At the end of May, Mr. Kim, a truck driver working for a trading company in Pyongyang, went to Dandong City of Liaoning-sheng, China. There Mr. Kim would suffer dumbfounding and unfair treatment. He has been doing his job well for several years without any accidents; he has also received compliments from many people who saw him take care of his old and decrepit car so conscientiously and drive it safely.

But on his way to Dandong City that day, he got in a minor collision with a Chinese automobile. As he pulled over in a hurry and got out of his car to figure out the cause of the accident, two Chinese approached and shouted at him about his poor driving. Mr. Kim replied in his clumsy Chinese to them, "Considering all circumstances, it is not my fault."

"You, Chosun (North Korean) beggar know nothing about driving; maybe, you were too hungry to drive a car in right mind. It is just a waste of time to fight with you, stupid beggar since we cannot get any compensation from you! So we'll have to beat you to blow off our anger." They instantly surrounded him and started beating and kicking him. Not until bystanders kept them from beating him did they stop and pull away.

"Dandong City has many foreign visitors, many from western countries and even from African countries. Chinese serve them as if they would gladly lick their boots, but they harshly discriminate against us, Chosun people (North Koreans). For example, they do not allow more goods to be loaded even though there is enough space. It is often the case that Chinese totally ignore our suggestions by pretending not to have heard us at all. Moreover, they are so fickle; they will only let us be when we beg and plead with a smiling face. Otherwise, which happens more often, they always get in our way. I would not speak out on this unfair treatment, but we suffer countless incidents of discrimination that just throw us into consternation.

Under these circumstances, our workers try our best, pretending that we are not Chosun people." Mr. Kim confessed in frustration. He also added, "Others might think of me as a lucky guy driving across nations and making money; however, they do not know anything about this bitter feeling of being discriminated against merely because I am from a poverty-stricken country. This bitter feeling may well be compared to that of people who lost their sovereignty. Such discriminations always breaks my heart. Only wealthy and strong nations can protect their people from all kinds of unfair treatment; I wish my country could become one of those wealthy nations as soon as possible."