

# **The Politics of Food Aid in North Korea**

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# Chapter 1: Introduction

## 1. The purpose of thesis

Since 1995, many countries of the world have provided assistance to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (hereafter 'DPRK' or 'North Korea') in order to help combat the country's problems with recurrent food crises. Four countries in particular, – The United States, China, South Korea and Japan – account for over 80 % of the 8.34 million metric tons (hereinafter 'MT') of food aid which North Korea received between 1996 and 2004 (CRS, 2005:17). Over 90 % of U.S. food aid to DPRK has been channeled through the World Food Program (hereafter 'WFP') and Japan has sent approximately 60 % of assistance through the WFP. In contrast, contributions from China and South Korea have been mainly delivered through bilateral agreements – China provided 100 % of total aid through bilateral agreement and South Korea aided more than 70 % through bilateral agreement (CRS, 2005:17).

The two main food aid donors to North Korea – the WFP and South Korea – hold two very different views on the food aid contingency. The WFP strongly emphasizes the transparency of aid distribution by the monitoring system established by the international aid regime, and supports the aid program through multilateral aid organizations. Being one of the main multilateral food aid donors, the WFP speaks for the aid conditionality which generally means 'no access, no food', or 'the most vulnerable should be recipients of food aid and the objectives of aid have to focus on the improvement of nutritional status of the most vulnerable people'. According to the South Korean view, unconditional food aid policy to North Korea<sup>1</sup> should not be viewed as controversial since aid to DPRK is given in the context of a unique socio-political situation. Thus, the South Korean government believes that an unconditional

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<sup>1</sup> South Korea's aid policy does not comply with the international monitoring regime and places great weight on the bilateral aid policy rather than multilateral aid.

and humanitarian aid policy based on ‘peace-prosperity policy’, adopted by South Korea president No Muhyun’s reunification policy toward North Korea, can contribute to peace-building between North and South Korea by promoting a socio-economic exchange. It, ultimately, can lead to the reunification of the Korean peninsula.

In this process, monitoring the distribution of food aid and the existing humanitarian crisis in North Korea caused by food shortage has been a controversial issue between the WFP as a main multilateral donor to the DPRK and South Korea since the beginning of the food aid program in 1995. Finally, on August 22, 2005, and despite a high level of food insecurity, the North Korean government announced that all international NGOs working with food aid or development programs in the country should stop their operations by the end of 2005.

With regard to this announcement, there are numerous views on the reason of North Korea’s announcement among NGOs, donor countries and aid experts. Among these different views, however, the issue of monitoring food aid is the most controversial issue. Why has the South Korea government regarded monitoring issue to be a relatively less important issue? How can one distinguish between food aid programs operating in other countries and aid to the DPRK? By answering these questions, this thesis studies the nature of the food aid program operating in the DPRK as distinct from other food aid programs through the objectives of South Korea’s food aid policy. Finally, the thesis studies how this aid policy has affected the vulnerable people in North Korea and examines whether the famine situation in North Korea is improving or worsening.

## **2. Research questions**

The research question of this thesis is as follows: *What characterized the South Korea’s food aid policy in the period 1993-2002? And to what extent did food aid from*

### *South Korea help combat famine in North Korea?*

According to the 1998 survey, when the famine in North Korea had been regarded as the worst rigorous famine there, 61 % of the children were underweight (weight for age), 16 % were wasted (weight for height), and 62 % were stunted (height for age) (WFP, 1998). The stunting rate is regarded as a severe public health problem (WHO standards).

After eight years, international efforts to improve food insecurity in DPRK resulted in a significant reduction in malnutrition. A joint survey by UNICEF, WFP, and DPRK institutions in 2002 showed that underweight children fell from 61 % to 21 %, wasting from 16 % to 9 %, and stunting from 62 % to 42 % (WFP, 2002).

However, despite of the progress the relevant aid organizations voiced their concerns that the DPRK continues to be in food insecurity and needs additional food aid. According to the recent CFSAM's (Crop and Food Supply Assessment Mission) evaluation by FAO/WFP in 2004, the DPRK will still have food insecurity despite a small increase in overall crop production of 3% in 2005 (WFP, 'Project Document').

Since North Korea appealed for food aid from the international community in 1995, the WFP has provided food supplies to the country for the past 10 years. However, during this period, the totalitarian nature of North Korea, often called 'a state of seclusion', hindered national or international aid organizations from understanding and examining the reason of severe famine and food insecurity. In addition, a political confrontation with South Korea and the United States since the Korean War in 1950 has distorted a systemic and rational approach to North Korean famine by applying an ideological aspect to the analysis. However, it is important to understand that all these national and international aspects and socio-economic and political factors caused the famine in North Korea and that the circumstance of famine has worsened. Therefore, understanding the main causes and the unique characteristics of famine in North Korea

is a fundamental procedure to the interrelated research question. The thesis studies the socio-economic causes of famine in North Korea by adapting the ‘dialectical approach to a theory of society’.

The main focus of this thesis concerns the *motives of South Korean food aid policy and the impact it has had on the famine in North Korea*. Since the beginning of food aid to the DPRK, the controversy of the food aid and its conditionality was a main issue between North Korea and international aid organizations. Especially with the huge increase in South Korea’s bilateral and relatively rare monitoring needed for food aid to North Korea in 2000, the controversy over the food aid and its monitoring level has been shown transferred from between North Korea and WFP to between South Korea and WFP. The key issue of this controversy between different actors, however, discerns which one method is the best to improve the desperate famine situation in North Korea. This thesis studies the distinguished motives of Kim, Youngsam’s administration (1993-1997), the first government to give food aid with the beginning of the food crisis in North Korea, and Kim, Daejung’s administration (1998-2002), a government to formalize bilateral food aid in the form of a loan, and how it works and affects the famine in North Korea.

### **3. Research methodology**

The study makes use of qualitative research methods. One main research method of this thesis is a literature review. Various types of literature related to the research topic were studied. The main literature sources were government reports and archives, evaluation documents on the aid program issued by various development or aid research institutions or NGOs, newspapers and a periodical published by different sectors such as economic, political, etc. For the in-depth study of the research papers regarding the South Korea food aid policy to North Korea, annual and monthly reports

and assessment papers published by the South Korea Government, WFP, UNICEF and UNDP, have been reviewed. In the South Korea government sector, analysis and project evaluation papers issued by the Korea Institute for National Unification (KINU) and related ministries of government such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Unification were used.

To study the internal mechanism relating to the cause of famine and the famine prevention policy of North Korea, *Nodong-sinmoon*, a main bulletin of North Korea communist party, was scanned on a daily basis during the period 1995-1998 which is regarded to be the worst food shortage period. In order to study and compare the Western and South Korean view on the relative topic, *Chosun-ilbo*, related to the right wing newspaper in South Korea but regarded as the most popular newspaper, was scanned. In order to find more specific controversial information on the monitoring issue since the South Korea government began to deliver a huge amount of food aid to North Korea in 2000, the internet editions of *Chosun-ilbo* provided data for the period 1993-2002. *Nodong-sinmoon* is not available in internet editions. I therefore visited the Center for North Korea Information in Seoul to read this newspaper.

Many websites of different organizations give different information on the different perspectives. Articles, documents and archives published by the South Korean government and the U.S. government were useful raw material for this research. Related to the South Korean government, I fully took the opportunity of finding new information from the database organized by the Korean Trade Association (KOTRA), the Ministry of Unification, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Korea Institute for National Unification.

The USAID (U.S. Agency for International Development) and USGAO (U.S. General Accounting Office) periodically publish reports on their foreign aid programs. These reports include introductions to the foreign aid programs and evaluations of

their policy. Also many private and public research institutes in the U.S. issue their research outcome relevant to food aid program in the DPRK. These documents, periodicals, and reports were used as research sources. These websites were reviewed: US Agency for International Development (USAID), US General Accounting Office (GAO), U.S. Committee for Human Right in North Korea, and The Brookings Institution.

Besides the national organizations mentioned above, the websites of international organizations, and research papers were reviewed. The criteria of selection of organization are relevant to aid and development issues. The following international organizations' websites and information sources were examined: World Food Program (WFP), Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), Relief web, UNICEF, UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), and United Nations Development Program (UNDP).

The other research method was to conduct semi-structured interviews, with relevant personnel. In order to collect more detailed and accurate facts to understand more profoundly the cause of famine, I interviewed North Korean refugees. In addition, I interviewed NGOs workers in charge of food aid to North Korea in South Korea, government officers in charge of the food aid program in the Ministry of Unification which complete responsibility of the food aid program to North Korea, and researchers who study famine and development issues of North Korea at different research organizations in South Korea. In the South Korea there are many North Korean research institutes but these institutes focus mainly on the unification policy. Finding researchers who study food aid related issues, therefore, was not easy. However, researchers in the Center for North Korean Human Rights of KINU became useful informants, especially, senior research fellow, Lee, Geumsoon. Lee's former research on *the effect of humanitarian aid to North Korea* and interview became useful

information to begin this study.

For the field study I visited South Korea twice. During the first study trip to South Korea, I stayed one and half months from the end of November to mid-January; the second field trip dates from the beginning of February to the first week of May, 2006. During the first study trip I conducted interviews of North Korean refugees, NGOs' workers, and researchers, and focused on collecting related information. I also scanned *Nodong-shinmoon* and *Chosun-ilbo*. Based on collected research data, at the second field trip I could focus on collecting more essential material needed to writing this thesis. During this second trip I could work for WFP Seoul office as a part-time intern. This opportunity made it possible for me to access substantial data issued by the WFP and South Korea government. Especially, my personal relationship with Lee, Hyeok, head of WFP Seoul office, made it possible to see the WFP's internal and latest data related to the DPRK food aid program as well as critical information not available for public access.

During my research trip in Seoul, I found that interviewing government and WFP officers in policy-making positions, and advisor groups is impossible because, even though my research topic focused on the policies of the two former administrations, the issue at hand is an on-going controversial and very political issue for them to give their personal and official opinions to a researcher of whom they cannot ensure identity. Since the DPRK does not allow South Korea entrance to it, the greatest difficulty in this study was that I could not help depend on other research papers, experts, officers and refugee interviews, monthly and weekly papers published by NGOs, and international organizations conducting projects in North Korea.

Lastly, from April 11 to 16 April, 2006 I visited North Korea as a monitoring member of a chemical fertilizer delivery. Although this trip was too short, limited and for the purpose of becoming familiar with the DPRK, I could experience the reality of

famine: there, I was not allowed to meet and speak with the people by myself but I could observe suffering from insufficient drinking water, electricity, saw the stopped public transportation, and closed shops along the street. The most valuable experience of the trip was visiting Wonsan, a harbor city located in the east coast of North Korea, making it possible for me to recognize the reality of famine in the DPRK. Although I had known the situation of famine in the DPRK by reading many articles and report papers and through refugee interviews, the personal experience of witnessing how the DPRK dealt with leftover food made me realize what the DPRK did not want to reveal to outsiders and that still how serious the situation of food shortage is in the DPRK

#### **4. Overview of chapters**

The thesis is divided into the introduction and four chapters. In Chapter 2, theoretical perspectives on famine and food aid are presented in two parts. The first part of this chapter starts with the theories applicable to analyzing the cause of famine in North Korea and then, as a main analytical framework of the cause of famine, the merits of ‘dialectical approach to a theory of society’ are undertaken, in priority. A political economic approach to the aid factor is undertaken in the second part of Chapter I. Every aid donor country has tacit or explicit objectives or motivations in their aid policies. I study what the political economy approach is and how this operates in the real food aid programs and projects.

Chapter 3, entitled *The Cause of famine in North Korea*, consists of three parts. In the first part, I provide an overview of socio-economic and political features of North Korea. In the second part, a chronological review on the famine and food aid programs in North Korea in the period 1995-2005 is undertaken. In the last part of this chapter, adapting the ‘dialectical approach to a theory of society’, I form a foundation for a further discussion on research question 2.

Chapter 4, *the politics of food aid*, consists of two parts. and focuses attention on the different policy between South Korea. I start Chapter 4 with a study on the South Korean government aid policy since the Korean War in 1953. What the underlying objectives of food aid of Kim, Youngsam and Kim, Daejung government were and how they had implemented food aid to North Korea based on that policy, is undertaken in the perspective of the political economic approach. Then, I compare these different policies and study the controversy on aid conditionality. The last part, *Different policies and different influences*, focuses on how two different policies have affected the famine in North Korea and what outcome has been.

Chapter 5, in conclusion, summarizes the major conclusion from the study and carefully draws a more desirable solution which may possibly ease a severe famine in North Korea.

## Chapter 2: Theoretical approach

### 1. Understanding the cause of famine in North Korea

#### The entitlement approach

It is not easy to find a single theory of famine that can provide a complete explanation for the chain of famine causation and its possible impacts (Alamgir, 1981:21). The main reason is that famine is caused by not only one or two factors but also various factors like socio-political, economic, historical and natural reasons and their interaction.

Considering famine theory applicable to North Korea case, nevertheless, two theories are available: One is *food availability decline* (FAD) approach and the other is *food entitlement decline* (FED) approach.

FAD approach sees the critical or sudden food shortage as a primary cause of famine. According to this approach, absolute food shortages result from the climatic disasters, physical elements like social conditions, and biotic factors (Cox 1981:6; Harrison 1998:xv; Desai 1988:128), the mismanagement of natural resources (Devereux, 1993:103-113), and geometrical increase in food demand by population growth.<sup>2</sup> This approach could explain how natural disasters occurred in 1995-1998 and communist economic system affected the food shortage in North Korea. However, driven by focusing on the cause of absolute food shortage, FAD does not explain why ‘triage’<sup>3</sup> famine happened in North Korea.

FED approach is receiving more attention in that it focuses on how food availability mechanism of people works in food shortage situation. Sen argues in his book *Poverty and Famine* that famine can occur even in the presence of an abundance of food. He

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<sup>2</sup> Thomas Malthus argued that unrestricted population growth could result in famine. cited from Banik (2002: 76)

<sup>3</sup> The unique characteristic of famine in North Korea is that the victim is mainly from urban factory workers in terms of social class and northern-east part of land.

thus sees that famine is not a result of lack of food but ‘the failure of entitlement’ (Sen, 1981).

His approach may be summarized in the following terms: *entitlement, capability, and public action and democracy*. First and foremost, the dictionary definition of ‘entitlement’ is ‘the right to have it or do it’. With regard to Sen’s entitlement approach to starvation and famine, famine is a result of deprivation of right to “command food through the legal means available in society, including the use of production possibilities, trade opportunities, entitlements vis-à-vis the states, and other methods of acquiring food” (Sen, 1981:45). Second, with the entitlement approach ‘capability approach’ makes an axis of Sen’s theory. The meaning of capability can be concretized by the concept of ‘functioning’. In other words, the capability is an ability or quality enabling people to function properly in order to achieve specific purposes and it is composed of a set of functioning bundles. (Drèze & Sen, 1989:18, Note 18). Thus, poverty in this regard is the result of a failure of basic capabilities to function. Third, Sen argues that famines occur under the absence of ‘public action and democracy’. Public action is a critical component in order to prevent and combat vulnerability to poverty and deprivation (Ibid: 16). This public action is achieved by “political activism, journalistic pressures and unformed public criticism” (Ibid: 259) and makes influence government policies by performing an adversarial and critical role. Hence, the absence of public action and critical counter party is a main characteristic of non-democratic countries and this eventually causes famine by failing to properly response to the crisis in the early stage (Sen, 1999:180-182).

Chung (2005) adapts Sen’s ‘entitlement theory’ in order to explain the causation of famine in North Korea. He argues that the entitlement approach focuses on the ‘formal rule’ such that it failed to explain the ‘informal rules’<sup>4</sup> occurring in the process

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<sup>4</sup> Informal rule includes ‘practice’, ‘devotion’, ‘honor’, ‘trust’, ‘sympathy’, and ‘a sense of justice’ Sen (1999)

of system change or functioning when the formal entitlement fails (Ibid: 32-34). By adapting Sen's 'extended entitlements',<sup>5</sup> Chung argues that the cause of famine in North Korea is the result of 'double entitlement failure': One is the failure of 'Public Distribution System' (PDS) as a formal entitlement; the other is the failure of 'exchange entitlement' by closing small markets appearing as a informal entitlement (Chung, 2005).

Briefly reviewing Chung's argument, first, the failure of PDS caused a massive famine in North Korea. PDS was a main public food entitlement system in North Korea. With the collapse of PDS, 'biased famine'<sup>6</sup> became a main characteristic of famine in North Korea. PDS puts its distribution priority on farm workers rather than on urban factory workers. Also, farm workers have their own land even if it is small in size.<sup>7</sup> For urban factory workers, the collapse of PDS means a complete loss of means and ways of acquiring food. In addition to this, the rigidly hierarchical social structure and regional discrimination based on political reasons<sup>8</sup> caused a 'triage'<sup>9</sup> famine. In other words, the lower class, rather than the higher class, and people in northern-east parts of North Korea rather than in other regions, were victimized by the collapse of PDS. Second, he argues that the decline of productivity in North Korea is a result of inefficient 'royal court economy'<sup>10</sup> and 'self-reliance' development<sup>11</sup> (Ibid). Third, the disapproval of private market generating spontaneously with the collapse of PDS

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<sup>5</sup> After Sen's 'entitlement theory', succeeding researches like 'dependency entitlement' and 'latent entitlement' (Devereux, 1993:75) led Sen to extend early 'entitlement approach' focusing on 'formal rule' to 'extended entitlements' including informal rules (Sen 1990: 140-143).

<sup>6</sup> The victim of famine is from urban and/or factory worker class rather than local farm worker class and regionally people who lived in northern-east of North Korea (Chung, 2005).

<sup>7</sup> Urban residents or factory workers are able to have their own small land but relatively few have its own land in compare with farmers (Ibid).

<sup>8</sup> Regionally, many political offender camps are located in Hamkyung-bookdo and Hamkyung-namdo and historically these areas received an application of discriminated policy due to the regional propensity to against government policy (Chung 2005).

<sup>9</sup> The meaning of 'triage' is 'selective'.

<sup>10</sup> This term was first used by V.Mikheev in 1993. Hwang defines this term as a mixed economy composed of military industry and a party economy (1999:15-16).

<sup>11</sup> In definition, the 'self-reliance' development means not participating international division of labor but based on their own natural resources, technology and labor, producing and providing the heavy and light industry

deepen famine by blocking people's 'exchange entitlement' and 'capability' to correspond to food shortage. Finally, the absence of democracy, i.e. the nonexistence of counter party and public action, led to establish an excessive development and production policies which was impossible to achieve. Hence, it has been followed by information failure like false reporting system on the quantity of agricultural products it became a causation of famine in North Korea (Ibid).

**Dialectical approach to a theory of society** (hereinafter 'dialectical approach')

By applying Sen's 'entitlement approach' above, Chung argues that the cause of famine in North Korea is 'double entitlement failure', i.e. the failure of formal entitlement through PDS and failure of 'exchange entitlement'. Showing Chung's analysis, Sen's 'entitlement approach' would be a strong analytical framework in tracing overall but also immediate causes of famine.

However, in order to understand a controversy over the food aid and its conditionality and study how the different policies between donors affect the famine in North Korea, study of socio-economic and political factors and their function in terms of food governance is needed.

Hence, I use Jonsson's 'dialectical approach to a theory of society'. This approach corresponds to 'basic causes' of malnutrition on UNICEF's 'conceptual framework for the cause of malnutrition'.<sup>12</sup> It focuses on how the potential resources of a given society are mobilized for production of goods and services and how these are distributed and consumed in society. Jonsson (1984) argues that in order to understand fundamental causes of hunger dialectical interrelation, i.e. the interrelations within one

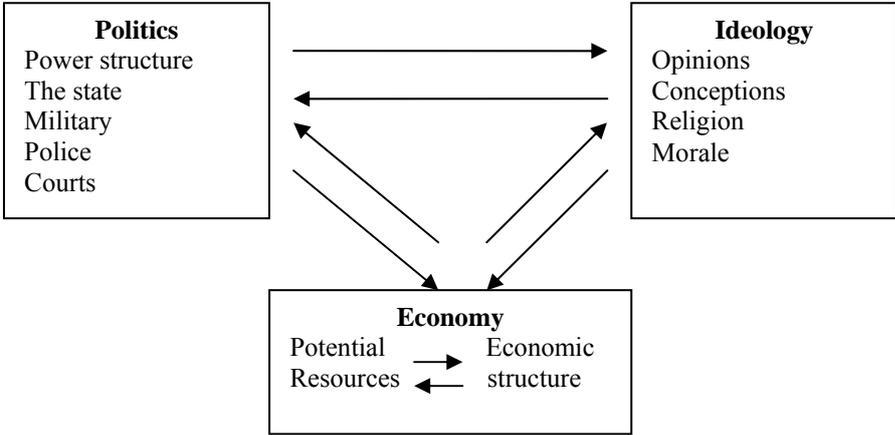
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products and agricultural products. Chung, 2005.

<sup>12</sup> According to this framework, the cause of malnutrition can be explained by 4 levels: *symptoms of sign; immediate causes; underlying causes; basic causes*. Each level is composed of different indicators: *symptoms or signs* is 'malnutrition', 'nutrition related diseases and early death or disability'; *immediate causes* is 'food intake' and 'health status'; *underlying causes* is 'food security', 'care', and 'prevention and treatment of disease'; *basic causes* is 'potential resources', 'economic structure', 'political and ideological superstructure'. Jonsson, 1993.

sector or between one sector and another sector as well as the economic, political, and ideological structures themselves should be understood.

**Figure 2.2: A dialectical framework of a theory of society**



Source: Adapted from Jonsson (1984)

The dialectical framework above shows that a society is composed of economy, politics, and ideology sectors and the characteristic of a society is determined by the difference of each sector and interrelations between sectors.

In society, the economy includes potential resources and economic structure. The former refers to what resources they have in the form of material and immaterial. The latter indicates the social condition of production determining what, how, and when is produced, and by whom. Here it is important to know that the economy determines superstructure like the politics and the ideology. In other words, the economic structure influences ‘people’s perceptions, their culture, religion, and ideology’ as well as the politics, i.e. it is a determinant which decides the characteristic of superstructure (Food as a Human Right, Jonsson, 1984: 25).

In short, the economy and the political and ideological superstructure are interrelated. It means changes occurring in one sector influence another sector and in turn reversely affect another sector. Thus, understanding these three structures and

their interaction can be the most efficient process to recognize the characteristic of a food crisis occurring in a certain society.

Based on this dialectical approach, this thesis understands the unique characteristic of food crisis and food governance in North Korea.

## **2. Food aid and political economy theory**

### **2.1 Definition of political economy theory**

*Political economy theory* can be largely characterized by understanding the relationship between politics and economics. When the term ‘political economy’ was first used in France in the early seventeenth century, it just referred to household management. However, now it has become one of the main social sciences. *Political economy* as an analytical framework explains phenomena in the national and the international level and searches for solutions to problems in history, sociology and anthropology, as well as politics and economics. That is, *political economy* can be said to be an interdisciplinary, multidisciplinary and comparative approach to the relationship between the public and private spheres (Routledge Encyclopedia of International Political Economy, Vol. 3:1225)

Because of this multidisciplinary characteristic of *political economy*, it has meant different things to different writers (Schumpeter, 1954:21). However, there is a consensus that the principle concern of political economy is the relationship between the public represented as the area of politics and private spheres understood as the area of economics. Herein the research sphere of political economy is limited to the domestic socio-political and economic issues and its interaction. At the international level, however, a series of phenomena in the early 1970s--the collapse of Bretton Woods international economic order, oil crisis of 1973-4 and the demands for New International Economic Order from developing countries—has developed a need for a

more combined approach on international issues outwards national boundary. These global impacts become an impetus for political economists to widen their research area toward the international level.

*International political economy* (IPE) has broadened its research area from the domestic level to the international level. As Strange defined, IPE is concerned with ‘the social, political and economic arrangements affecting the global systems of production, exchange and distribution, and the mix of values reflected therein’ (Strange, 1988: 18). The IPE scholars started to explore the interactive relationships ‘between domestic and international levels of analysis; between economic issues and political conflict; and between institutional patterns and economic structures, on the one hand, and the politics that takes place within them, on the other’ (Underhill, 1994;23). With the increase of international interaction in the all parts of society, IPE put down roots as an analytical framework suggesting multidimensional understanding international phenomena.

## **2.2 What is political economy of food aid?**

Food aid agenda falls in the area of domestic political economy and international political economy in that aid resources regardless of the form of resources--finance, grant or grain, or modality of aid, through the multilateral organizations or bilateral aid agreement--flow from donor countries’ border to recipients’ territory.

“The history and nature of food aid”, writes Stokke (1991: 6) “result in a complex interweaving of realist policy considerations and humanitarian concerns in all donor countries.” According to Stokke’s argument, aid such as development assistance is motivated by political and economic interests as well as humanitarian purpose and such motivations affect the designing of aid programs (Ibid: 5). In other words, donor countries decide their aid policy dependant upon their own concerns and decision

making criteria. That means it is difficult to say that a pure humanitarian concern is the only main rational affecting aid decision-making process and its outcome.

Most donor governments decide aid amount and recipients based on many different decision making determinants as well as humanitarian concern and their balance of concerns may vary among countries. 'A few governments are concerned to articulate policies consistent with an ethical perspective' said Stokke, '...but even the most idealistic tend to combine altruism with the pursuit of self-interest.' (Stokke, 1991:5).

Different backgrounds and motivations underlying external assertion of donor governments affect not only the efficiency of food aid but also problem solving process. Therefore understanding donor's real motives and objectives behind of humanitarian assertion can be said a prerequisite process in planning a more efficient aid program and overcoming the obstacles generated during the aid program.

Applying a political economy approach to analytical framework makes it possible to understand the fundamental reasons causing the conflict. A critical issue regarded as a main reason of confrontation is no more than a plausible excuse. The North Korea monitoring issue is the same as this. The monitoring problem as a critical issue between international food aid donor countries and DPRK is an external stalemate generated by the clash of donor's motives and receiver's standpoint. This ostensible conflict often hinders aid donors and recipients and receivers from reaching a more desirable solution in the perspective of humanitarianism. In this perspective, therefore, political economy of food aid as an analytical framework of thesis is essentially concerned with the politico-economy objectives and its interaction affecting donor countries' aid policy outcomes. It focuses on the interaction of political and economic factors as well as humanitarian aspect reflected in donor governments' aid policies. When applied to a situation of conflict over the aid condition, political economy analysis on the food aid makes it possible to understand overall the food aid conflict.

### **2.3 Motives for giving food aid**

Why do donor countries, usually rich countries, maintain an aid program? On what ground is such a decision taken? By trying to answer these two questions through reviewing aid literature particularly related to the motives for giving aid, this thesis will open the gate to further analysis of the South Korean government's aid policy to North Korea.

The first food aid occurred in 1812. At that time United States began to provide emergency food in the amount of \$550,000 to earthquake victims in Venezuela and later provided food to earthquake victims in Martinique (1902) and Sicily (1908) (Singer et al, 1987:17). However, these aid activities were not organized into structured food aid programs until the First World War. After the end of war, in order to rehabilitate war-torn European countries, the first major long-term food aid operations evolved and regularly commenced the period of food aid as a means of development and emergency relief. In particular, The Marshall Plan which aimed to restore Europe regionally focused on the Western European countries after the end of World War II became a precedent example showing the multifold motives of food aid. The Marshall Plan can be evaluated as a typical food aid mode having characteristics of political, economic and humanitarian motives. Briefly said, with the humanitarian motives which purposed to relieve war-torn European society, it also, in terms of political motives, aimed to blockade the national communism movement in Western Europe. In addition, in an economic perspective, the United States and Canada, which were main donors, needed to expand their commercial market for possible sale of their commodities and surplus of food to Europe (Singer et al, 1987).

The example above mentioned cannot be generalized with respect to the rest of aid programs operating around the World. However, motives of aid may generally fall into three categories--political, economical and humanitarian motives. This

characteristic of aid becomes more definite in real politics. President Nixon (1970) said in his statement to Congress on the U.S. aid program:

There are three interrelated purposes that the United States should pursue through our foreign assistance program: promoting our national security by supporting the security of other nations; proving humanitarian relief; and furthering the long-run economic and social development of the lower income countries.

In his statement, national security may be a similar concept having political motives. Wall (1973) argues that donor countries by using food aid as a tool want to secure and keep the stability in certain regions which are considered as an important or critical area for their national interests like national security or international relation. He argues that in the U.S. aid policy represented Nixon's statement that the concept of security can be divided into three categories: military security, economic security, and political security (Ibid; 45). Based on this categorization, it is possible to group the motives of food aid.

According to his grouping, first, Wall says that military interests in less-developed countries are two-fold (Ibid). One is "seeking to maintain peace among poor countries so that they will not be drawn into the third world war" and the other is "seeking to contain the influence of enemy powers or hostile ideology by maintaining bases or strong allies in poor countries." Therefore, according to this analysis, aid to South Korea can be attributed to military motives, namely South Korea's inclusion in the aid program after the Korean War in 1950 simply by the strategic position South Korea is believed to hold as viewed by politicians.

Second, he argues that in the case of Great Britain, France, Germany, Australia, Japan and the European Communities economic motives was "the most important determinant of aid level and distribution". In short, in the case of these countries, in order to keep their commercial market which has been exploited since the colonial period or develop new markets for sale of their commodity or secure a stable low-

material acquisition they decided the amount of aid and recipient countries (Ibid, 47). Such a case was found in the U.S. food aid policy represented Public Law 480 in 1954, known as the Agricultural Trade Development and Assistance Act. After enactment of PL 480, it provided the legislative tool for the U.S. Government to buy the surplus food from farmers and distribute it on appropriate terms to the countries in food shortage (Singer et al, 1987; 22). Hence enactment of PL 480 and food aid under PL 480 reflects two aspects of food aid: food aid is a combined outcome which is composed of a surplus disposal motive in terms of economy and humanitarian motive.

Third, in effect, it is difficult to clearly distinguish political motives from other motives like economical, military or humanitarian motives as political motives is highly interrelated with economic or national security motives. For instance, PL 480 was enacted not only to satisfy the demand of surplus disposal market in terms of economic motives but also get farmer's political support in the aspect of domestic politics. In addition to this, the most adequate explanation of political motives can be found in the recent property of food aid. In other words, food aid nowadays is used as a tool conveying political pressure from donors to recipients. Under the goal of aid which should contribute to the improvement of human rights or freedom in non-democratic countries, usually less developed countries receive food aid from donors trying to link their aid to human resource development projects or programs related to human right or freedom improvement in the recipient.<sup>13</sup> Due to these properties of food aid, there is an extreme approach to the motives for giving aid. Griffin and Enos (1970) write:

How much a country lends to another country will not be determined by its need, or its potential, or its past economic performance, good or bad, or its virtue, but by the benefits it yields in terms of political support.

However, this approach ignores humanitarian motives of food aid reflecting an

international effort to relieve the suffering of humans around the world. Referring to the various motives for giving aid, in this thesis I study the full range of motives inherent in food aid policy of South Korea.

## **2.4 Effect of food aid**

In order to solve the distressful conditions, different forms of relief aid and strategies can be adapted. Financial aid, technology transmission, commodity aid, or food aid can be provided by donors separately or as a package. Different forms of aid such as in the form of bilateral or multilateral would be adapted in different cases. In practice, Singer, et al argues that the “distinction between food aid and a form of cheque is not nearly so clear-cut as might appear” (Singer, et al. 1987:37). Thus, while judging effective means of aid is a difficult and complicated process, it is regarded as an essential procedure in planning relief programs, projects, or emergency aid (Ibid). In this part I review the effectiveness of food aid, i.e. why choose food aid instead of a cheque or commodity aid.

Food aid programs are embarked upon at the express formal and/or informal request of a government. According to the degree of food shortage and the kind of aid, the volume of food aid and the form of aid are different. However, the most fundamental and distinguished reason of food aid which is found in many food aid programs or projects is to relieve a critical and massive hunger occurring in recipient countries. Further, considering famine as a widespread and mass mortality caused by collapse of food intake and outbreak of disease, food aid can be a direct and decisive effect to loosen tension. In the worst situation when people are in the state of severe and lasting food deficiency, in terms of metabolic and body functions, the right kind of food aid provided at the right time to the right people can be a decisive influence on saving

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<sup>13</sup> See more Stokke's 'Aid and Political Conditionality', 1995.

peoples' life (Singer, 1987: 80).

However, there are opposite views, for example, in the long term it cannot be a panacea solving a set of causes of food crisis, i.e. Singer, et al say '...in the longer term it cannot hope to have anything more than a palliative effect'(Ibid: 80). In the perspective of regarding food aid as expendable supplies, they argue that food aid should be used as a cornerstone or a tool building basement for development (Ibid: 80). Following, I briefly discuss the additional purpose of food aid besides relief from hunger.

In addition to the 'palliative' purpose of food aid for the relief of displaced persons/ refugees or famine/natural disaster relief, food aid has a wide range of purposes and these purposes aim to 'develop' socioeconomic and political factors of recipient countries. By doing so it is thought that it can free the vulnerable from poverty and underdevelopment. The basis of this kind of thinking is that there is a general and common assumption that aid workers or food related experts see the basic cause of famine and related food crisis as the failure of development. In this respect Singer, et al., argues that food aid should be explained with development and related to each other:

Whether the large amount of assistance now being provided from the developed to the under-developed...in which food aid plays such a key role, will follow the same evolution<sup>14</sup> into true development is an open question..... There is, however, no doubt as to the need to persuade events to take that course (Singer et al. 1987:90).

In food aid literature there are different criteria for grouping kinds of food aid. For instance, it is convenient for some to group food aids by purpose of aid. For others, the mode of food aid provision like 'programme type'<sup>15</sup> and 'project type'<sup>16</sup> food aid

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<sup>14</sup> After the end of Second World War, American aid to European countries under the name of Marshall Plan has aimed to develop those countries so that the United States wanted to relieve food shortage in Europe and further protect their capital market to sell their commodities and democracy from the Soviet Union (Singer, et al. 1987).

<sup>15</sup> 'Programme food aid' is a 'impersonal' delivery type in that food aid is supplied to government stocks, reserves, etc., and is sold to the recipients and distributed through national relief schemes by the government. So the recipient cannot tell the difference between it and national commercial purchase or production. Singer et al.

can be a more easily adapted criterion. Here I adapt the latter as a grouping criterion as this is a wider term with which to explain different kinds of food aids occurring around the world.

‘Programme food aid’ of food aid is generally provided for the purpose of foreign exchange to be freed and used for development by providing an indirect form of financial assistance, commodity supply that the country would normally have had to purchase commercially or could not procure due to the inability to purchase, and by signing an agreement<sup>17</sup> between donor and recipient. The provided commodities are sold on the local market through outlets and the revenue derived from such sales which called ‘counterpart funds’ is used for certain development purposes (Singer, et al. 1987: 91).

Under the heading of budgetary support, there are three main purposes of programme food aid.

First and foremost, this type of aid can function as a *foreign exchange savings*. In other words, by providing aid in the form of a loan, credit, grant, commodity, the recipient countries can save the cost of insurance or freight which necessitate payment by the recipients themselves. This kind of aid is a useful mode of provision to food deficit countries with a low export earning, or countries having an imbalance of payment difficulties as a result of heavy indebtedness or for other reasons.

Second, the purpose of *local currency generation*, which is known as ‘counterpart fund’ in the food aid literature operate, is generated through the sale of food aid commodities on the local market and normally government controlled outlets and under the agreement between donor and recipient government. The main objectives of

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1987: 90-91.

<sup>16</sup> ‘Project food aid’ is a ‘personalized’ aid which is ‘directed or targeted to certain designed group of beneficiaries, or the institutions housing such beneficiaries’. Singer et al. 1987:90-91.

<sup>17</sup> Agreement takes on a concession or loan between donor and recipient government to sell the commodities on the local market.

this type of aid are designed to increase agricultural production or rural incomes.

Singer et al (1987) explains it thoroughly:

These funds may be used for the purchase of local foods for other development projects, for incentive measures for local farmers, financing public works such as access roads, storage, and distribution or marketing facilities, purchase of fertilizers, pesticides, tools, and equipment for agricultural production (Singer et al, 1987:92)

Lastly, the purpose of food aid as one type of program is to create *national reserve stocks*. The reserve can not only cushion price fluctuations at the normal situation or especially in the time of food shortage by limiting sudden demands on the budget to purchase at high price but also function as a buffer for speedy relief when emergency food aid is pending or delayed.

Recent food aid operations as well as the North Korea case show that the program type of food aid- foreign exchange saving, local currency generation, and food reserve- usually operate together in the relief field. However, it is distinguishable from ‘project food aid’ which is a personalized means of delivery of food aid. The next part studies ‘project food aid’, which focuses on personal distribution of aid resources and usually has been adapted by recent WFP’s projects and is not the program type of food aid as a impersonal distribution mode, and is more focused on development for long term perspective.

The project food aid is a personalized aid which is directly targeted to certain intended groups of beneficiaries under the food deficit, and purposed to relieve the vulnerable situation by direct intervention methods. Due to the mode of delivery, the recipients are aware from where the commodities they are receiving are derived. It also makes possible for the donors to trace the flow of food aid and its effect, i.e. to where their aid sources are distributed or whether the aid designed to relieve the certain crisis achieves the intended goals or not.

When grouping different kinds of project type, different categorization criteria by

different people and organizations are used. In order to give a closer theoretical review, here I follow the WFP categorization and its subdivisions as WFP's projects in North Korea<sup>18</sup> fall into this category.

First, *human resource development* projects aim to fulfill basic human needs in terms of nutrition and metabolism and further develop the human resource by linking food aid projects to educational institutes. This purpose can be divided into 5 subdivisions: food aid for mothers and pre-school children; school feeding in elementary and secondary school; vocational training, youth camps, and pre-vocational centers; literacy and adult education courses; hospital patients, convalescents, the aged. All these projects aim to not only protect the most vulnerable group from encountering malnutrition and famine but also rebuild the sustainable and self-reliable development capacity.

Second, projects for *the development of economic and social infrastructure*. Food aid can be used for the purpose of substitute payment for development and, in this respect, food aid is usually undertaken through the food-for-work (FFW) mode. In the project type food aid, FFW mode is a major type of project in that it 'pays the hungry with food aid to lay the foundations for a better tomorrow' (WFP) as well as fulfilling basic food needs. This type of project includes public health programme; housing, building, public amenities; transportation, communication; and, community development.

Third, *projects of a directly productive nature*. This type of food aid is generally supplied for reconstruction of agriculture, forestry, and fishery as well as industrial development. These projects include land development and improvement, land settlement and agrarian reform, assistance to refugees, crop production and

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<sup>18</sup> WFP's projects in North Korea are mainly composed of vulnerable group feeding, local food production, food for work. The World Food Programme DPR Korea Review of Operations in 2001

diversification, animal production and dairy development, forestry projects, fishery development, industrial projects. The above projects also are usually undertaken through the food-for-work mode. In the North Korea case, typical WFP's projects in the mode of FFW are tree-planting for reforestation and embankment-building to prevent flooding<sup>19</sup>.

Lastly, *price stabilization and national food reserve projects*. This purpose of project aid has almost the same function as national reserve stocks of programme food aid, i.e. to provide a cushion against price fluctuations, the initial capital stock.

Above, I reviewed the different purposes of different projects and programmes. Singer et. al. emphasizes that in the line of food aid from the beginning to the end, these (initiatives) must be carefully planned<sup>20</sup> and clearly designed<sup>21</sup>, assessed for their potential impact on domestic agricultural production and consumption, and comply with 'rigorous standard of accountability' (Singer et al. 1987: 100). As mentioned above, the different WFP's projects are still operating in North Korea and their concerns are also found in the process of food aid. Keeping these characteristics of different food aid programmes or projects in mind, I scrutinized South Korea's food aid policy to North Korea.

### **3. Operationalization of research question**

The main reason why South Korea was chosen among many possible donors is that South Korea's food aid amounts for a relatively high portion of food aid to the DPRK and its bilateral and unconditional aid policy is criticized by the critics of international aid regime.

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Projects must state about the 'intended participants, the nature and scope of the problem, and the result sought...' Singer et al, 1987: 100.

<sup>21</sup> 'Projects proposal must set down minimum expectations of inputs, results, and conditions deemed essential for success.' Ibid.

The time period of the research question is limited to two administrations, from 1993 when the DPRK made an official food aid appeal to the international society, until 2002, the period of Kim, Daejung's administration. During those eight years there were vast fluctuations of food aid amounts. These changes reflect the socio-political and economic changes within this period. Therefore the thesis also studies how the donors' motive changes have been reflected in food aid policy in the line of political economic changes.

The motives underlying the South Korea food aid programs, which has been carried on under the name of humanitarian aid but frequently criticized due to the politicized characteristics of them, will be proved. In this process, the political economy approach to food aid will be applied to this study as a main framework. Based on the perspective of political economy of food aid, this thesis will discuss how socio-political and economic determinants affected donors' aid motivations and objectives. Then how these motives have had influence on the famine in North Korea and what changes have resulted from the food aid policy of South Korea will be discussed.

The key question of this thesis is how to study the underlying motivations and objectives of food aid. First, the main determinants affecting donor's motives and objectives will be studied. This study will be evolved from Stokke and Wall's analysis on the motives for giving aid. On the basis of Wall's three categories which are military, economic and political security, the determinants suggested by the Stokke's research will be a starting point of this stage and another determinant, and assuming that their impact was decisive will be actively studied and added. After studying what motives underlie South Korea's aid policy, thesis studies what the outcome has been beneath the interactions within the unique DPRK socio-political circumstance.

# **Chapter 3: The causes of famine in North Korea**

## **1. General information and Food insecurity in DPRK**

### **1.1 General information of North Korea**

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) takes socialism as its main ruling political system. While the Korean peninsula was under the control of the Japanese colonial period, Kim, Il-sung was a member of the Chinese Socialist Party. With independence from Japan in 1945, he was elected a secretary of the North Korea Labor Party. Then, just before the Korean War in 1950, he was placed as a representative of military committee, and a supreme commander, which is in effect the same as a president of state in a democratic country but much stronger, having the totalitarian power of one person. Until his death in 1994, he ruled North Korea as a dictator. After his death, his eldest son, Kim, Jong-il, succeeded to national sovereign power, as his father had held, without any rational and democratic election process.

With regard to the economic system, the DPRK still follows a planned economic system and adopts PDS (public distribution system) as a resource distribution system. Until the tacit suspension of PDS from the early 1990s, all national resources are produced, distributed, and consumed under the socialist economic system.

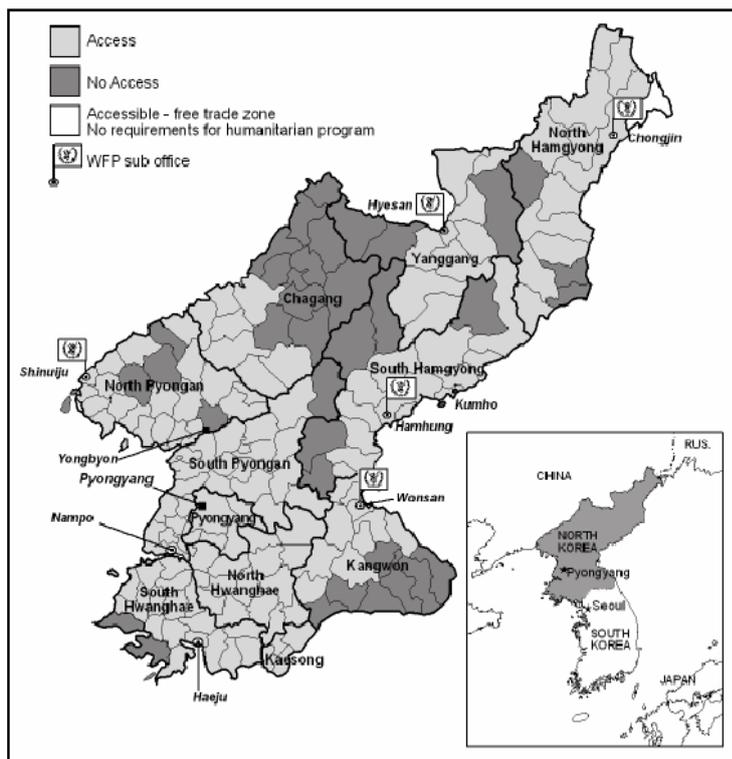
DPRK has a population of 22,541,000 and the rural population accounts for 39% of the total population. The agricultural labor force is 3,323,000 and accounts for 29% of the total labor force (FAO, Country Profile). Agricultural production accounts for 30% of the GDP (Ibid). The DPRK has 12,540 sq km of land area. Arable land accounts for 2,500 sq km and it amounts to 21 % of the total land area. The geologically mountainous area, not proper for farming, accounts for almost one fifth of the land and due to its climatic condition, subjected to long and extremely cold winters and affected by Siberian high pressure, only a winter wheat and barley are raised in the

main farming area.

The main agricultural product is rice, potato, corn, wheat, barley, sweet potato, and soybean. Among them rice is a staple food of North Korea. However, due to the continuing food shortage, corn and potato have been substituting for rice and while fixing rice and corn as the main agriculture product of the nation, both account for 36 and 41 % of food product, respectively, in 2003 (Ibid).

The military expenditure is estimated to be upwards of 23 % of the GDP (2002), 5 % of the total population is a standing army, and 21 % of the population is a reserve army (Military Balance 2003/2004, IISS). It indicates that the DPRK is a highly militarized country and spends many resources to maintain their military regime.

**Figure 3.1 Map of North Korea**



Geographically, the DPRK is located in northeast Asia.

Domestic administration districts of the DPRK are divided into 6 'do', which are the state level, and two autonomous districts:

Pyungando, Hwanghaedo, Hamyongdo are divided into North and South respectively;

Chagangdo, Yanggangdo, and Kangwondo make up other districts of the land; among the rest are two cities, Pyongyang, the capital of the DPRK, and Kaesong, another large city. The national border, an armistice line, created after the Korean War divides the Korean peninsula into North Korea (DPRK) and South Korea (Republic of Korea).

Due to the difference in political and economic systems, i.e. rejection of free market, non-democratic political system, and an intention to reunify South Korea by military power, North Korea is still in confrontation with the United States and South Korea politically, economically, and ideologically.

## **1.2 Food insecurity and famine in North Korea**

According to a 1998 survey, when it had been regarded as the worst rigorous famine in North Korea, 61 % of the children were underweight (weight for age), 16 % were wasted (weight for height), 62 % were stunted (height for age) (WFP, 1998). The stunting rate is regarded as a severe public health problem (WHO standards).

After eight years, international efforts to improve the food insecurity in DPRK resulted in a significant reduction in malnutrition. A joint survey by UNICEF, WFP, and DPRK institutions in 2002 showed that underweight children fell from 61 % to 21 %, wasting from 16 % to 9 %, stunting from 62 % to 42 % (WFP, 2002).

The nutritional figures mentioned above represent the key conditions for malnutrition and starvation and show how severely the people in North Korea are affected by food shortage; represented is the result of food shortage which caused physical bodily changes, and, in which region, geographically or class socially, i.e. children, mother, elder people, man or woman, were the worst victims in terms of the impact of food shortage.

These high percentages of nutrition evaluation figures show that North Korea was in severe malnutrition; more exactly the term starvation is more applicable to North Korea as the condition of North Korea is not just a state of temporary food supply failure but a crisis of chronic food shortage continued since the early 1990s and systemic through North Korea. However, the questions, ‘was there in effect famine in North Korea?’ or, ‘Can we call the food shortage in North Korea a famine and not

malnutrition or starvation?’ still remain to be explained.

However, in order to name ‘famine’ as food shortage in North Korea, the situation of North Korea must be explained, based on important factors or a sufficient condition for constituting famine, i.e. following are the explanatory factors that must be included: prolonged starvation, the malfunction of body organs and immune system, and an increase in the likelihood of death. In other words, prolonged starvation causes the malfunctioning of body organs and particularly, it weakens the immune system resulting in the increase of likelihood of infections, which in turn increases the likelihood of death. Thus the term ‘famine’ can be defined as a widespread and mass mortality resulting from a combination of mass starvation and disease. Then the question ‘Does the definition of famine fit North Korean case?’ remains.

The debate of how many people have died is not the focus of this thesis. Therefore, based on the existing literature of food crisis in the DPRK, I seek to answer whether the food crisis in North Korea falls under the criteria of famine or not.

First of all, the starvation of North Korea is not a temporary food shortage caused by flood and drought, from 1995 to 1998, but an outcome which results from a prolonged and overall collapse of production, distribution, and consumption of national resources. Natsios, who was an assistant administrator of the Bureau of Food and Humanitarian Assistance of USAID<sup>22</sup> in 1991-1993, divided famine into 3 phases. The primary phase is a time, from 1990 to 1994, for North Korea before its appeal for international aid publicly. He regards this phase as the incipient stage of famine. The secondary phase is from 1995 to 1997, the time of collapse of the PDS and North Korea’s effort to relieve the impact. Here, the central government’s effort includes a request of food aid to international societies like the WFP or foreign governments. The tertiary phase is the period from 1998 to 2000 when the mortality rate decreased

and the emergence of a system of individual family responsibility<sup>23</sup> (Natsios, 2001:105-121). This categorization of the phase of famine shows a generalized pattern in other researches. Still the report and concern regarding death toll are watched and studied by international aid organizations and NGOs. Although there are doubts about the occurrence of famine in North Korea, when considering the testimony of refugee<sup>24</sup> and international or NGOs' aid workers who participated in aid projects in North Korea, the existence of prolonged food crisis in North Korea is evident.

The next stage of prolonged inadequate food intake is the malfunctioning of body organs and particularly the weakening of the immune system, resulting in the increase of likelihood of infections. This constitutes one of the main properties of famine, i.e. in North Korea cases of death from infection accounts for the main cause of death. According to a 1998 Good Friends report of 1,694 North Korean refugees, 28.7 % of total refugees, which included all family members and up to 9,249 persons who died during a two-year period, from late August, 1995 to late September, 1997, death from infection (Good Friends, 1998). Another report prepared by Good Friends in 2000 also revealed that while the famine was in peak time, from 1995 to 1998, the death from infection accounted for 60%; and, another 40% was caused by starvation, epidemic diseases like lung tuberculosis, paratyphoid, typhoid, cholera, etcetera, spread among the vulnerable in North Korea (Good Friends, 2000). These factors show that the food crisis, and its impact on the vulnerable in North Korea, is enough to meet the criteria of famine.

Mortality is a critical determinant in deciding whether the phase of food

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<sup>22</sup> USAID: U.S. Agency for International Development

<sup>23</sup> "The central authorities thus appear to have made the deliberate decision to privatize the distribution system even further: from the country authority who were given food distribution responsibility in Phase II of the famine, to a system of individual family responsibility in phase III" (Natsios, 2001: 121)

<sup>24</sup> Kim stated that PDS was completely stopped in 1994 and when she goes back to her village in 1999, half of the village population was dead.

shortage falls into famine or other categories such as only malnutrition or starvation. As mentioned above, the causal relationship among starvation, disease and mortality, three main reasons emerge, and their interaction between factors resulted in mass mortality in North Korea. In particular, with regard to the North Korean case, however, it is quite difficult for relief workers or organizations to total the number of deaths from food shortage and its related impact. Due to the property of ‘closed society’ of North Korea, exact mortality is not known but only a rough conjecture can be made. There is a difficulty in grasping mortality results because of obstacles, namely: the disallowance of evaluation operation of aid organizations or international society by North Korean government; the problem generated in the process of generalization of figures calculated based on refugee’s testimonies<sup>25</sup>; too large a deviation in the different mortalities calculated by international or national aid organizations, the North Korean Government’s official announcement, related research agencies and researcher’s report, respectively. The table below reflects such difficulties:

**Table 3.1 The estimated mortality during famine in North Korea (million)**

<b>Organizations or Experts</b>	<b>Estimated Mortality (period)</b>
Good Friends (South Korean NGO)	over 3,50 (8.1995 - 7.1998) <sup>1</sup>
Hwang, Jangyop (Former secretary of labor party in North Korea)	2,50 (1995 – 1997) <sup>2</sup>
US Congressional Research Service (CRS)	0,90 - 2,40 (1995 – 1998) <sup>3</sup>
Natsios	2,50 (1995 – 1997) <sup>4</sup>
Choi, Soohyun (Deputy foreign minister of North Korea)	0,22 (1995 -1997) <sup>5</sup>

1) Bubrun 1999: 173-210, 2) Hwang 1999:18, 3) Woo-Cumings 2002:46, 4) Noland 2003:12, 5) Jungang-ilbo, May 16, 2001, Source: Adopted from Chung, 2005: 177

As shown in this table, there is a big deviation in mortality announced by North Korea’s Government, Choi, Soohyun, deputy foreign minister of North Korea<sup>26</sup>, and

<sup>25</sup> Most of refugees are from Hamgyongdo and almost all mortality figures are calculated based on this sample group. However, due to the sample group’s regional characteristic and refugee’s political status, mortality may be biased. In other words, Hamgyongdo is not the poorest place and borders on China so that their food entitlement is better than other regions. In addition, refugees are generally used to give negative or exaggerated images to their home government. Natsios, 2003; 270-288.

<sup>26</sup> With regard to mortality, in order to avoid international criticism on the accountability of government, official announcement of government in famine tends to be cut down. Singer et al, 1987.

other personnel or research institutes like Good Friends, Hwang, CRS, and Natsios. However, based on such different evaluations on the mortality in North Korea except for the North Korean Government's official figure, it is possible to roughly estimate that the mortality of North Korea during the famine from 1995 to 1998 is up to 2 millions. Thus, this figure means that the food crisis in North Korea overwhelms the impact of starvation and malnutrition and falls into the criteria of famine.

## **2. The cause of famine in North Korea**

### **2.1 Food governance**

In the 21st century one often hears or speaks about nutrition in the perspective of good governance and global governance. The 5<sup>th</sup> Report on the World Nutrition Situation reflects new trends. The report's indicators are regarded as development indicators and fundamental prerequisites for the MDGs- Millennium Development Goals (SCN, 2004). Global concern regarding nutrition and human rights has become central in the light of the goal to be attained by global cooperation.

However, the huge gap between the poor and the rich countries and this gap is continuously widening even during the concept of global governance era. North Korea, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), is one of the countries which is classified as experiencing a state of food insecurity. The North Korean food crisis began in the 1990's. According to the UN North Korea mission report published in 1997, the food stock of the Public Distribution System (PDS), on which North Korea primarily relies, was expected to run out by late-June, 1997. The report stated 'Without substantial imports, therefore, the failure of the PDS to supply food seems inevitable in a matter of weeks' (GIEWS, 1997).

The UN and the international society are highly concerned about the collapse of the PDS. Monitoring and transparency issues arise in the process of giving

international food aid. In socialist states like North Korea, the PDS is an essential governance tool as well as a main means of resource management. That means, in order to exactly grasp the characteristic of food crisis occurring in North Korea, it is essential to understand how communism as a main governance mechanism affects how food is produced, distributed, and consumed in a socialist country.

The main objective of this part is to show how food governance operates in communist states. In order to look into the operation framework between communism and food governance, this part will first define the meaning of food governance and then reinterpret communism in the perspective of food governance. And, then the North Korean governing system will be analyzed in terms of food governance.

There are many different definitions of governance. However, the focus of my discourse regarding this *governance* converges with *good governance*. With the impact of globalization, global governance has become an important issue in recent national and international conferences. The evolving definition of governance reflects a type of socio-economic development and also represents a concept that all developing and developed countries should follow in accomplishing good governance.

According to the UNDP, *governance* is ‘a neutral concept comprising the complex mechanisms, processes, relationships and institutions through which citizens and groups articulate their interests...’ (UNDP, 1997a). *Good governance* means that these mechanisms, processes, relationship, and institutions are characterized by ‘participation, transparency, accountability, rule of law, effectiveness and equity.’(UNDP, 1997b).

However, food governance has hardly been discussed in terms of quality and quantity. According to Salih’s argument (Salih, 2003), there are three reasons why the food security governance remains a tacit topic. First, for most of the post-Second World War period, national security, namely military security, overwhelmed human

security. Therefore, food security as an essential part of human security was absent. Second, with the end of the Cold War, national security was substituted for new forms of polarization e.g. ethnic, religious, economic, regional, et cetera. Therefore military security could not shift towards food security. Third, Salih (Ibid) argues that food security governance should entail the accountability of the governors to the governed through binding commitments to which developed countries are fearful of subscribing. While developed countries supply food and money in complex emergencies, they are less keen to support long-term food security.

In order to make the definition of food governance clear, however, an explanation is needed to distinguish the difference between food security and food governance. The World Food Summit of 1996 defined food security as existing ‘when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life.’ Food governance, however, focuses on the matter of governance encompassing the physical environment as well as the socio-economic and political aspect of society in order to accomplish all four aspects of food security: availability, access, stability and quality. In short, food governance can be defined a series of operations at the national and local levels which contribute significantly to reshaping national food policies and transforming them into food security policies (Ibid).

## **2.2 Communism and food governance**

Marx believed that communism would establish a more reasonable, humanitarian, and utopian society for the working-class during the French industrial period of the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. According to Marx, full communism is the final state of humanity in which productivity is higher than human needs in which every one can help himself to warehouses of food. (Full Communism, 1998a; 434) And this communist utopia is

based on the assumption that in the extreme version is ‘nothing is scarce.’ In this state, there are not any allocation problems. Therefore, at the final state of communism, there are no hunger, no discrimination and no struggle for resource among people.

Both good governance and communism share the same goal of attaining an optimal state of resource allocation. However, their fundamental assumptions regarding the quantity and attainment of resources are rather different. This vital difference between communism and liberalism has become a main reason in explaining why communism has been weakened even though it was once a system affecting many different countries and their political, social welfare, and market systems.

Although the critical contradiction of communism is not mentioned in this paper, I will discuss the food governance factors inherent in the ideal strategies of communism. Remarkable characteristic of communism are resource control, distribution, and governance by collective and planned socioeconomic system. According to this socioeconomic governing system, at least, there should not be any hunger or chronic diseases under the principles of communism.

I will now look into the principle of communism in order to find out the inherent meaning of food governance in a nutrition studies perspective. In order to withdraw the meaning of food governance from communism ideology, we need to look into Salih’s view as proactive on food governance. His view may be summarized as: exerting pressure on government and others involved in food security policies, maintaining accountability and oversight in order to ensure compliance with commitments, establishing an administrative regulatory framework in order to improve food availability, access and quality.

It is very useful to understand what should be done in order to attain food security in the perspective of food governance. Therefore it is necessary to understand the

traits of food governance in communism.

Marx understood that communism's most important principal lay in the accountability of governance through collective management and distribution of resources. He believed that a centrally planned socioeconomic system was more efficient and proactive in terms of food governance. Such accountability inherent in communism meets the availability, access, and stability aspects of food security; however, quality--another aspect of food security--is not important in communism ideology. According to communism *needs* are accepted as valid and *wants* are limited since productivity can not be unlimited.

The goal of communism is to guarantee all citizens adequate food intake to satisfy basic needs. Communism attempts to guarantee a classless society without property, private or nationalized ownership by the means of production, and without commodity production. Vulnerable classes or socially neglected group ought not to be phenomena in communist countries. Communism also assumes that all people can get jobs whether they are willing to work, talented or untalented. Workers should receive a proper reward that must in total correspond to the individuals' consumption needs, and correspond to their labor without abuse of their labor input. (Routledge Encyclopedia, 'Full Communism').

In short, communist tried to strengthen the right to access to resource by empowering the proletariat ownership of the means of production; it was an essential prerequisite for communist to establish governing system possible to enhance food security as a fundamental prerequisite to human right.

Another important trait of food governance apparent in communism is the great importance attached to securing citizens' participation in the management and distribution of resources. Communism emphasizes that social-political movements should be responsive to the workers' class, not at the behest of a state separated

negligent of the needs of society's members. (Routledge Encyclopedia, 'Communism').

Marx and Engels thought that the working class must capture control of major economic and political institutions that direct society towards the pursuit of collective interests. The definition of good governance in modern terminology is based on notions of authorized judiciary systems and legitimately strong governments; communist ideology claims that a utopia is impossible when there exists a class-based hierarchy between rulers and the ruled. In order to accomplish a full communist state, active participation in the resource distribution system is only way to solve problems of social imbalance, exploitation of labor, and inefficiency. In the perspective of food governance, communist viewed self-governance is the best way in realizing food security. This trait has something in common with good governance as represented by a separation of powers, transparency of public agencies, and decentralization of resources, diffused decision-making, and participation by citizens in public policies.

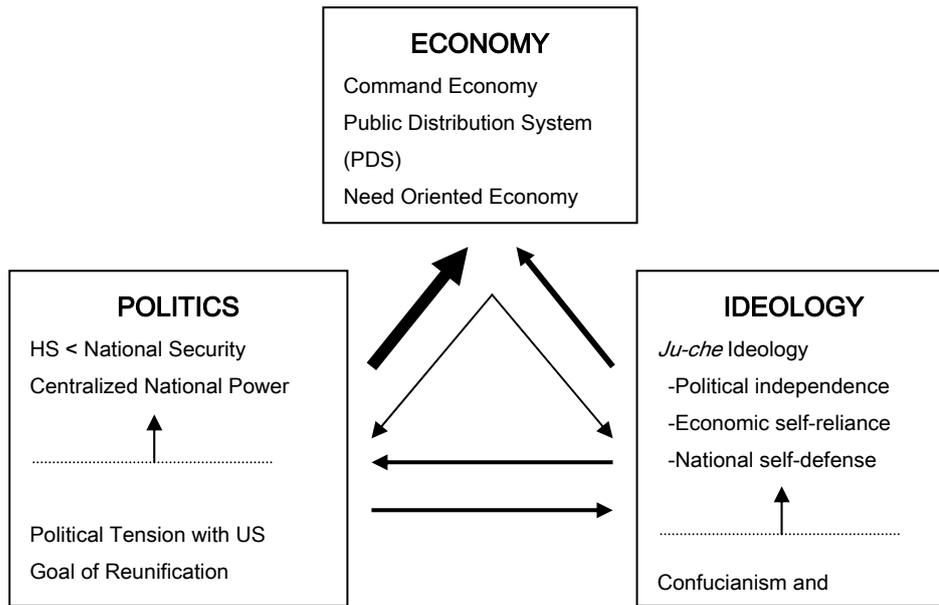
I will now examine the socioeconomic framework of North Korean in the perspective of food governance.

### **2.3 North Korea and food governance**

#### **The characteristics of food governance in North Korea**

North Korea was established during the Soviet military occupation in 1945. Korea became independent from Japanese colonial rule at the end of the Second World War. As in other communist countries, North Korea also adopted three main governing tools: ideological justification, physical regulation, and distribution control. The organic mixture of these three components has played an important role in the governance of the DPRK since its establishment.

**Figure 3.1 A causal framework of food insecurity in North Korea**



\*Thickness of an arrow means the extent of influence / HS: Human Security

Source: Adopted from Urban Jonsson's 'Dialectical Framework of a Theory of Society', but reorganized in accordance with the characteristics of the DPRK.

I will now focus on the ideological, political and economy superstructure as outlined by the Urban Jonsson (1984) Model. More specifically I will look into how the North Korean government controls the production, distribution, and consumption of resources in order to maintain its socialist structure.

Jonsson's Dialectical Framework begins its analysis with 'potential resources'. His analysis is based on the premise that the upper structure, or the sociopolitical system, is dependent on natural resources. As shown in the previous diagram, North Korea adopted a different socioeconomic framework by placing the economy at the top of the structural model in opposition to Jonsson's dialectical system (Jonsson, 1984).

### **Physical regulation and food governance**

The economic framework of North Korea is a political creation of the communism promoted by Kim Il-Sung

Politics in North Korea are subordinate to the military state. The military state

prioritizes national security rather than human security. It is a totalitarian country in which almost all national power is embodied by one dictatorial leader. These two special features originate from the establishment of North Korea and its political environment.

North Korea has historically not had a well-developed civil system. Before the colonial era, Korea was a feudal state whose ideologies were based on Confucianism. There existed an emperor who had an absolute power and whom the people had to obey. In 1945, when Korea became independent from Japan, the Soviet Union and the United States divided Korea into North and South Korea. Kim Il-Sung, a leader of independence army, established a communist government with the USSR’s political and economical support. For North Koreans who had experienced harsh colonial rule and no democratic system, communism, which called for an equal and physically abundant society, was an attractive alternative.

**Table 3.2 Military expenditure as a share (%) of GDP**

Ranking	State	share (%) of GDP	Ranking	State	share (%) of GDP
1	North Korea	25.0	9	Angola	9.8
2	Congo	21.7	10	Israel	9.7
3	Eritrea	16.0	11	Jordan	9.3
4	Oman	13.4	12	Ethiopia	8.0
5	Saudi Arabia	12.0	13	Vietnam	7.1
6	Kuwait	10.7	16	Algeria	5.9
7	Qatar	10.6	18	Yemen	5.7
8	Syria	10.3	19	Yugoslavia	5.3

Source: IISS, The Military Balance 2003-2004, World average military expenditure: 3.5% (GDP, 2001)

A divided territory and a different ideology made it possible for Kim Il-Sung to strengthen his governance power. Kim purged North Korea of opposition parties and dissenting voices in order to establish one dictatorial government. In this process he used political propaganda propelling the threats of an American invasion and the reunification of the Korean peninsula. The US is still the most menacing threat for

North Korea, whilst the communization of South Korea is a goal of North Korea. After his death, Kim Il-Sung handed over his absolute power to his son, Kim Jung-Il.

All policies regarding production, distribution, and consumption of resources are grounded in terms of national security and the Kim Il-Sung cult. However, it is not easy to find factors in accordance with human security.

The Workers Party of Korea (WPK) has the responsibility of controlling issues surrounding political, economic, social, ideological, and cultural arenas. The WPK's absolute power is enforced with physical regulations such as military forces, mutual surveillance system between houses, ideology injection, and PDS.

People are excluded from the decision-making process. Their only role is obedience. Normal people who are not a member of WPK are prohibited from participating to decision-making process, exerting pressure on government and others involved in food security policies. In the perspective of WPK, the objective of the national existence is not maintaining accountability for food security but only maintaining accountability for national security like national border defense from indeed not existing outside enemy.

Moreover, the prohibition of the right to passage for regional control worsens food availability, access, and quality. Also, after the legislation of 'North Korean Human Right Act of 2004' by the US, the Chinese government who did not want diplomatic conflict with the United States due to the North Korean refugees has tighten control over the border between North Korea and China. Thus, banned free passage is restricting activity for finding alternative foods as a coping strategy and devastating food availability.

In North Korea food was used as not a means to achieve good governance but a means of physical governance which aim to control the people. Its limitation originated from the establishment of North Korea, political tension with the United States, goal of

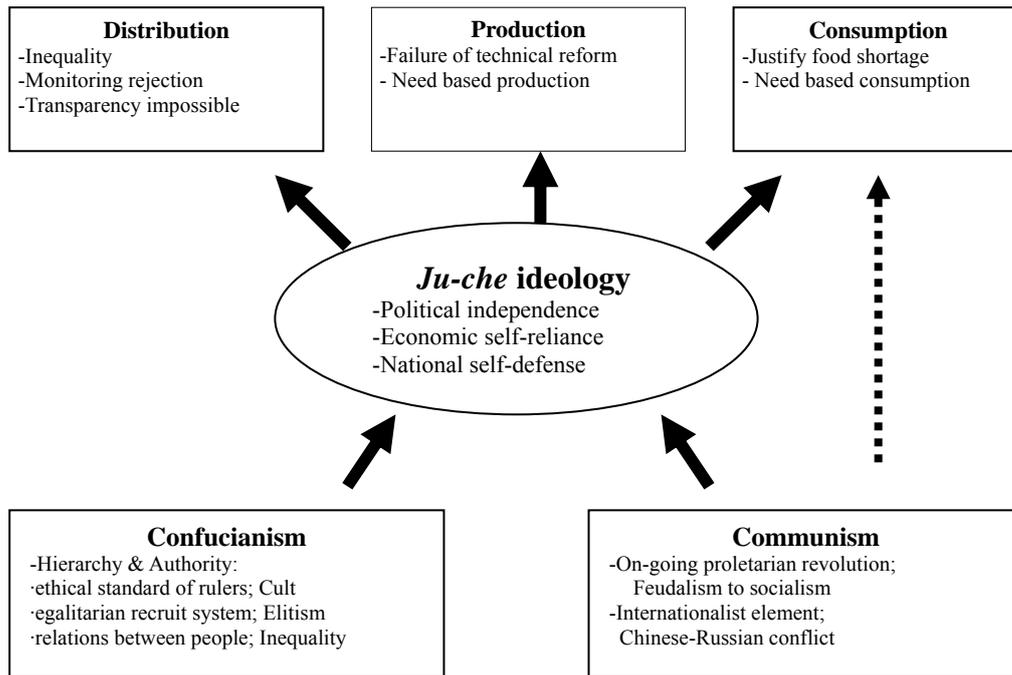
unification, absence of civil society, and personal ambition, makes it impossible for North Korea to transform national security to food security.

### **Ideological justification and food governance**

In addition to physical control another means of influence on people's food security is the ideological justification represented through *Ju-che* ideology<sup>27</sup>. *Ju-che* ideology is defined as independence in politics, economic self-reliance, and self-defense in order to protect national sovereignty (Cornell, 2002). This can be interpreted that developing countries must rely on their own resources in terms of development. Indeed this unique ideology has helped North Korea to skip the capitalist stage in going directly from feudalism to socialism. This has been recognized as a development model of the third world countries.

*Ju-che* ideology was established in 1955 as an alternative ideology to a series of movements criticizing personal worship which arose in the Soviet Union after the death of Stalin. This ideology has been a result of circumstances affected by its geographical location as a peninsula with superpower neighbors, the national and international political situation divided nation with a life and death struggle to demonstrate the superiority of each side's system and the Soviet-China conflict of 1960's, and the ideological heritage respecting authority and the hierarchical Confucianism as well as disciplined and hard-working nationality (Cornell, 2002). Kim Il-Sung believed that only the *Ju-che* ideology represented political independence, economic self-reliance, and national self-defense as a solution in establishing a communist country in North Korea. It has operated as a strong governing tool at all levels; a political, economic, and social structure responding to complicate national and international circumstances.

**Figure 3.2 Food governance and the role of *Ju-che* ideology**



In order to understand the relationship between food governance patterns and the impact of *Ju-che* ideology, Confucianism and communism should be taken into account. Confucianism is a ruling ideology in Asian Countries. It suggests a norm regarding the ethical standard of rulers, egalitarian recruit systems, and relations between people. First, according to Confucianism, good governance can only be achieved if a country is ruled by a morally superior individual (Cornell, 2002). Second, government officer recruitment is based on an egalitarian examination system. There, the classical class is guaranteed high executive positions without question. Elitism based on egalitarian recruit system has received solid respect from the people for authority. Third, Confucianism regulates relationships between the ruling and the ruled, parents and children, the old and the young, and man and woman.

*Ju-che* ideology reflects these characteristics of Confucianism such as political worship, elitism, and inequality. These characteristics of Confucianism help in understanding why North Koreans absolutely pledge their loyalty to the Workers

<sup>27</sup> It is often used as ‘self-reliance’ ideology

Democratic Party (WDP). Also it explains how *Ju-che* ideology was misused in establishing Kim, Il-sung's kingdom and during the half century.

These characteristics of Confucianism functioned in preventing the collapse of Kim, Jong-il's regime even in the failure of food governance regarding food distribution, production, consumption.

While Confucianism made it possible to pledge an absolute obedience to authority, communism provided a fuel in driving *Ju-che* ideology. As mentioned above, communism assumes that the final stage of communism is a state ruled by the proletariat. *Ju-che* ideology emphasizes that North Koreans are on the way towards the establishment of proletarian government ruled by them, and towards the reunification of the Korean peninsula as a communist state. Therefore North Koreans endure hardship in order to accomplish this duty. *Ju-che* ideology and communism justify the present food shortage and impute a present hardship to the international sanctions of the United States. A series of movements described through catchphrases such as 'Hard March', 'Building for Great Country', et cetera, have played a role justifying the food crisis of the 1990's (Hwang, 1997).

Communism also underlines that *needs* should be the basis of production and consumption rather than *wants* or *desire*. In other words, according to communist ideology just human basic needs are emphasized so that the extra products are not produced. This principle was the cause of lower development of light industry and food production in communist countries. Their definition of the needs has been staying at a low level of food security. For instance, food supply policies of the former Soviet Union were to provide sufficient food for the population. Nutrition concerns focused only in providing sufficient animal protein (Helsing, 1999). North Korea is in the same situation. According to the PDS of North Korea, the general public receives individually, grain, 700g/day, fish, 1kg/month, and meat, 1~2 kg/on special holiday;

However, these food allotments reflect the former situation of the collapse of PDS of the end of 1980's (Center for Unification Education). Now food insecurity is more serious than before: According to the WFP Emergency Report, the daily quantity of PDS is 300g/person (WFP, 2002a). In order to appease dissatisfaction coming from the chronic shortage of food and light industry goods, North Korea stresses the importance of the incomplete proletarian revolution and the principles of communism.

The *Ju-che* ideology pursues self-reliance in terms of economy. This means that North Koreans depend on domestic technology rather than on the import of agricultural machinery or technology. The regime in Pyongyang could develop indigenous industry and achieve sizable results in a short period of time. However, the structural defects of focusing on heavy industry and a denial of peoples' living conditions have resulted in the failure of food production system. As a result, North Korea is suffering from a severe shortage of agricultural machinery, fertilizer, and agricultural technique.

Monitoring and transparency problems regarding food assistance are a large issue presented by international food aid organizations. Banbury, WFP's director for Asia, pointed out that the tightening of the DPRK government's restrictions on the WFP's ability to monitor food aid and to assess needs have undermined international support for the agency's operations (WFP, 2005). North Korea continually rejects allowing international monitoring by international food aid agencies. Active monitoring by international agencies would allow North Koreans knowledge of the failure of its economic system. *Ju-che* ideology stresses an economic self-reliance and political self-independence. These two principles further developed under the transition period from communism to capitalism in the socialist countries such as the Soviet Union and the condition of Eastern Europe. At that time North Korea felt the need to distinguish itself from between Eastern Europe countries in order to sustain its regime. After the

collapse of the former Soviet Union, *Ju-che* ideology played a practical role in strengthening the governing power and preventing weakened governmental control. Therefore, although North Korea now is suffering from food shortage, it can not easily open its borders to international aid agencies in order to assess its needs. The Kim Jung-Il regime is in a dilemma: It can not approve international monitoring: yet it also cannot tolerate a long-term food shortage.

### **Distribution control and food governance**

The North Korean economic system is a centralized command economy in production, distribution, and consumption. The Public Distribution System (PDS) is a main resource distribution system based on the social class. Need determined by the state compels peoples' consumption patterns and is the orientation of industry. It is important to understand that the North Korea economic system is not determined by available resources. The North Korean economic system is a tool justifying dictatorial governance and strengthening the political power of Kim, Il-sung.

The North Korean government exercises centralized power to control citizens. The government commands the complex mechanisms, processes, and institutions through which individual citizens and groups articulate their interests. Production and capital investment are controlled by the highly bureaucratic party and all ownership of means of production is reverted back to the state. All private competition and business are not allowed in the North Korean economic system. Moreover, the state determines the size, locations, and kind of labor. Need is determined by the government. Need is minimized in order to justify shortage of production and distribution of resources. Even though North Korea has rare natural resources, the trade dependent rate of North Korea is low due to the lack of foreign payment capability and the principle of self-reliance.

North Korea experienced serious floods in 1995 and 1996. In addition, during the droughts of 1997 and 1998, arable land, which accounts for 14.1% of the land, has been devastated. Trade dependence of North Korea was kept around 20% until 1990, and decreased to 10% after 1990 (Korea National Statistics Office, 1998). In addition to food shortages, the United State's economic sanction since the Korean War and the contradictions of communism principle are the main political and economic causes of food shortage.

Food governance in North Korea, therefore, failed to accomplish all four aspects of food security: availability, access, stability and quality. The idea of communist utopia has priority over the distribution of resource, leading to a production and consumption of wretched result in communism countries. Under the name of equality, people's right to access and availability has been denied. Citizens who should have been able to depend on the public distribution system experience starvation as the government has failed to secure food stability and quality. Worse of all, the failure of food governance results in human rights abuse by strengthening physical regulation and ideological justification in North Korea.

Nowadays, however, North Korea is pursuing economic reforms. The government has given tacit permission in conducting trade with private markets and private business in order to complement the collapse of PDS. Also investment of South Korean companies is increasing in North Korea. Because the change in North Korea is different from the principles to which the North Korea has adhered to desperately for the last half century, it is expected that food governance will be changed fundamentally.

### 3. Summary

Food insecurity and food governance are determined by political, ideological, and economic factors. Although removing the underlying and immediate causes could be a temporary solution in order to stop a striking food crisis, it is impossible to improve the nutrition situation without solving the underlying causes of malnutrition.

It can be said that the reason of food insecurity in North Korea is the failure of food governance. North Korea has failed to accomplish its citizens' right to food access, availability, stability, and quality, as a result of biased national security, ideological isolationism, and misuse of economic resources.

First, the priority of political discussion in DPRK is heavily concentrated on the national security, exactly military security not human security. North Korea is one of the most critical areas in terms of world politics. It is not difficult to find articles or watch television programs regarding human rights, nuclear weapon development plan, and famine issues occurring in North Korea. This part of the thesis has already mentioned how the political tension between North Korea and other countries like South Korea and the United States affects food governance.

Second, the *Ju-che* ideology should be changed toward promoting human rights and democracy in the DPRK. During the period of the Korean War and the process of rehabilitation of economy and politics, *Ju-che* ideology played a meaningful role. However, now the international situation demands more opened, transparent, and cooperative relationship between nations as equal political entities. *Ju-che* ideology in this respect failed to enter into the international society demanding responsibility and accountability.

Third, the failure of adequate food and commodity production for the all people caused the collapse of the public distribution system. The main reasons for the failure of production are the contradiction of the principle of the communist economic system, outer economic sanctions, and natural disasters.

## **Chapter 4: The politics of food aid**

### **1. Chronology of food aid to North Korea**

This chapter studies the *motives of South Korean food aid policy and the impact it has had on the famine in North Korea*. For this I study the distinguished motives of Kim, Youngsam's administration (1993-1997), the first government to give food aid with the beginning of the food crisis in North Korea, and Kim, Daejung's administration (1998-2002), a government to formalize bilateral food aid in the form of a loan, and how it works and affects the famine in North Korea.

I start Chapter 4 with a study on the South Korean government aid policy since the Korean War in 1953. What the underlying objectives of food aid of Kim, Youngsam and Kim, Daejung government were and how they had implemented food aid to North Korea based on that policy is undertaken in the perspective of the political economic approach. Then, I compare these different policies and study the controversy on aid conditionality. The last part, *different policies and different influences*, focuses on how two different policies have affected the famine in North Korea and what outcome has been.

North Korea was receiving food aid from the communist bloc (China and Russia) from the beginning of the food crisis in the early 1990s. The North Korean food crisis came to reality when Russia collapsed and there was a policy change in Chinese trade to North Korea. Due to North Korea's constant decrease of food import (Noland, 2005:13-15) starting from the early 1990s, coupled with a series of natural disasters in 1995, North Korea appealed for international food aid. Shortly thereafter, the WFP moved into North Korea, and its operations. They gradually have expanded to become the WFP's largest single-country operation.

From 1995, North Korea has been receiving constant international food aid. The type of food aid was multilateral assistance through WFP or bilateral assistance

through China and Korea. America gave the most assistance of 2 million MT of assistance out of 3.7 million MT, worth nearly \$700 million, over 90% of which has been channeled through WFP.

China became the second largest contributor after the dissolution of the Soviet Union. Bilateral assistance was mainly used in Chinese aid to North Korea but the total amount of assistance cannot be verified because it is difficult to combine all the support given since North Korea became a communist country. According to the official statistics by WFP, roughly 2 million MT of food aid was provided by China. But, if we add the special trade method which is provided at “friendship prices”, often called concessionary trade, it will surpass America (CRS, 2005:22). In addition, it is expected that in 2006, 250,000 MT of bilateral donation will be made (WFP, 2006:7).

Following China, South Korea supported 150,000 MT to North Korea in both type of multilateral and bilateral donation in 1995. While donations from other countries decreased, donations from South Korea constantly increased to 2,350,000 MT. About three-quarters of South Korea’s food were sent bilaterally to North Korea and the bilateral shipment was sold to the North Korean Government, which pays for the food via a loan from the South Korean Export-Import Bank. Current supports are rendered through the loan type with minimal monitoring from the government resulting in criticism from other donor countries.

Japan started from 1995 and used multilateral donation type through the WFP. Total donation of Japan is 1.2 million MT. The donation made in 1995 and 1996 were irregular conditional and political donation made by Japan to normalize the relationship with North Korea.

WFP played an important role in relieving food crisis of North Korea. WFP provided food for 6.5 million North Korean who are in danger through international appeals since 1995. WFP designated North Korea as *Emergency Operation* (EMOP)

situation for the last 10 years<sup>28</sup> and supported 3.9 million MT of food aid, excluding bilateral donation, to the DPRK. As the transparency of distribution is the first condition for WFP relief operations, a lot of problems emerged between donor countries and the North Korea government, which became one main reason of extending the period of EMOP, normally 3-12 months, to 10 years<sup>29</sup>. The hermetic characteristic of North Korea, as well as other related factor, made it impossible to proceed to development from an emergency operation. After ‘8.22 announcement’ of North Korea, WFP changed from the EMOP situation to *Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation (PRRO)*<sup>30</sup> by approval of the Executive Board held in February 2006 (WFP, 2006:7).

With the approval of this operation, two year hence the WFP will provide 150,00 MT of food aid valued at US\$102.2 million for 1.9 million beneficiaries through activities centered on nutritional enhancement through mother-and-child health programs and local food production, educational development through school feeding and asset creation through food-for-community-development projects. In PRRO, because of the DPRK’s negative attitude on the monitoring issue, it seems unavoidable that there would be a decrease in the monitoring and scale of the project (Lee, 2006: Interview).

## **2. Motive and its changes in the food aid policy of South Korea**

### **2.1 Chronology of food aid of South Korean government**

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<sup>28</sup> “Many disaster-hit communities need help for longer than three months in order to get back on their feet. In this case, the Country Director draws up an Emergency Operation or EMOP before making an appeal to the international community for funds and food aid.” WFP Operation Introduction. WWW.WFP.org.

<sup>29</sup> EMOPs usually last for between three and 12 months. Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Drawn up when it becomes apparent that the 24-month assistance provided under a WFP emergency operation (EMOP) will not be enough, WFP can prepare a Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation. WFP’s Protracted Relief and Recovery Operations (PRRO) help sustain disaster-hit communities as they re-establish livelihoods and stabilize food security.

The South Korean government directly provided 150,000 MT of food in 1995 and still continues donations through multilateral and bilateral aid. Among them, three-quarters of total donations are direct donations. In 1995, South Korea donated 150,000 MT of food and 111,950 tons from 1996 to 1998 through WFP. In the year 2000, 500,000 MT were donated directly and 400,000 MT from 2002 to 2004, respectively, 500,000 MT in 2005, being bilateral donation. During this period, from the year 2001, the Korean government donated 100,000 MT of food every year through WFP. But from the year 2005, there were no multilateral donations.

**Table 4.1 Deliveries of South Korea food aid to North Korea (in Metric Tons)  
1995-2005**

Year	ROK- WFP		ROK Bilateral	
	Scale	Form	Scale	Form
1995			150,000	-rice
1996	3,409	-mixed cereals		
1997	68,541	-dried milk: 300 -corn-soya blend(CSB): 8,389 -mixed cereals: 9,852 -corn: 50,000		
1998	40,000	-wheat flour: 10,000 -corn: 30,000		
1999				
2000			500,000	-corn: 200,000 -rice: 300,000
2001	100,000	-corn		
2002	100,000	-corn	400,000	-rice
2003	100,000	-corn	400,000	-rice
2004	100,000	-corn	400,000	-rice
2005			500,000	-rice
<b>Sum</b>		<b>511,950</b>		<b>2,350,000</b>

ROK: Republic of Korea, ROK-WFP: Deliveries of ROK food aid through WFP to North Korea

Source: Ministry of Unification, South Korea, 2005

In this chapter, I will focus on the changes of food aid policy according to the change of the South Korean government. The South Korean government adopts a single, five-year term for its president-oriented government as a main political system. The first civilian president Kim, Youngsam, established his administration in 1993 before the DPRK famine had begun, and ended with a foreign exchange crisis in 1998. Kim's

presidency was followed by the first nongovernmental party with president Kim, Daejung, who was elected in 1998. His government lasted until 2002.

As South Korea adopts a president-oriented political system, existing policies are succeeded, reformed or disposed of by the change of president. South Korea's food aid policy was conducted under the reunification policy and each president brings different features to the food aid policy issue.

In this chapter I study the features of food aid policy of two South Korean administrations by looking into the motives of food aid. This study is based on the political economy theory and Stokke's determinants of aid policy are tools with which I analyze the motives behind each policy. In this process, 'Unification White Paper', and archives issued by each administration and newspaper were used to trace the motives. After finding the motives of aid, the thesis discusses how these political, economical, social, cultural motives affected the real food aid policy and outcome; i.e. I study the actual aid negotiation process, size, type and form of aid.

## **2.2 Political power changes and its influence on the food aid policy**

### **2.2.1 Kim, Youngsam administration's national community unification policy: 1993-1997**

Kim, Youngsam's government (hereinafter Kim), the first civilian government, established a 'national community unification policy' and suggested '3 steps of unification process' - reconciliation-cooperation step, South-North union step, and unified country - as a practical plan. Kim's unification policy was not different from preceding administrations' policies. In order to understand the historical development of the unification policy and to fully capture the nature of Kim's unifications policy, the unification policy of the previous government needs a brief summarization.

In 1945, immediately at the end of the Second World War, achieving independence from Japan, Korea was divided into different governments: the southern part of the 38 truce line of the Republic of Korea, giving birth to a democratic political system; above the line, a socialist country, the DPRK, was established. Under the unstable sociopolitical and economic condition of South Korea, Lee, Seungman's government suffered from The Korean War initiated by Kim, Ilsung in North Korea on June 25, 1950 and completely separated the Korean peninsula on July 27, 1953. Lee, Seungman's policy of North Korea with the beginning of a separated country focused on achieving unification by internationalization of the Korean issue, i.e. common election between the North and South.

*4.19 revolution* that resists dictatorship of Liberal party created the 2<sup>nd</sup> republic based on parliamentary cabinet system constitution in 1960. This was when active discussions of reunification were conducted. But length of government was too short for the discussions to come true. Political instability and controversy of power led *5.16 coup* in 1961 and then military government, the third Republic, took over the nation.

The unification policy of the third Republic was pretty much similar to the first and second Republic and did not acknowledge North Korea as a political entity. North Korea was recognized as a communist puppet regime that needs to be reunified. Under exactly this recognition, Park, Junghee, President of the third Republic, prioritized anti-communism and used it as a main governing tool. From 1961 until *10.26 assassination* in 1979, the assassination of President Park, Junghee, the unification policy of Park was 'First build, later unify'. He asserted economic development and anti-communism and focused on political and ideological competition with North Korea.

The unification policy, however, faced a new phase from the 4<sup>th</sup> Republic.

President Park strengthened his governing power with *October renovation*<sup>31</sup> in 1972. He then made ‘3 basic principles for the peaceful unification’ which were ‘mutual inviolability agreement’, ‘mutual communication and cooperation to restore trust and exchange and talks’ and ‘liberal election under the strict monitoring and management.’ Based on the new policy, South Korea started to recognize North Korea as the counter party to be peacefully unified, and opened the opportunity for mutual interchange.

The 4<sup>th</sup> Republic was over after the assassination of President Park, and in 1981, the 5<sup>th</sup> republic began with Jeon, Do Hwan, of military background. The 5<sup>th</sup> republic continued until 1988 with the North Korean policy of ‘Unified people and democratic unification plan’. Based on this stance, North and South established a peaceful unification law to assert unify under peaceful method proposing active interchange.

But, the unification policy was not put into practice. In 1988, the first president elected by the people, Ro, Taewoo, began the 6<sup>th</sup> Republic. The 6<sup>th</sup> Republic had a significant meaning in Korean politics as it was the first free election conducted by the people of North Korea. The Ro government asserted structure of peoples’ community with communication and cooperation through ‘7.7 declaration (1988)<sup>32</sup>’, ‘Korean Peoples’ community unification scheme<sup>33</sup>’. As a result of ‘7.7 declaration’, ‘South-North interchange law’ was established on August 1, 1990 and based on this law ‘South-North fund’ was created. ‘South-North high ranking official conference’ was successful as a result of eight pre-conferences and two practical meetings from February 8<sup>th</sup> 1989 to July 26<sup>th</sup> 1990. At the conference ‘Mutual communication, cooperation and inviolability agreement’, ‘Mutual interchange committee and

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<sup>31</sup> Park, Junghee’s martial law proclamation on October 17, 1972.

<sup>32</sup> According to the declaration, South Korea recognizes North Korea not as an antagonistic counterpart but a cooperative companion. In order to build one national community between North Korea and South Korea, the declaration emphasizes, both country increase human and material interchange.

<sup>33</sup> September 11, 1989. By the presidential declaration, Kim emphasized that on the basis of the ‘7.7 declaration’ unification process should focus on building a national and racial unification not just political or system unification.

operation agreement’, ‘Mutual interchange and cooperation performance and observance addendum agreement’ were made to establish the groundwork of mutual interchange. The 6<sup>th</sup> Republic showed that the active and developed unification policy advanced from the 4<sup>th</sup> to the 5<sup>th</sup> Republic not only recognizing the existence of North Korea, but recognizing a mutual political system to establish companionship.

The unification policy of the Kim, Youngsam government also improved through these policies. The Kim government is significance not only in being the first civilian government but also in the actual commencement of aid to North Korea. In 1995, the Kim government provide 150,000 MT of rice through bilateral donation under ‘National community unification scheme’ when North Korea officially requested food aid from the international community. In 1996, 3,409 tons were provided and 68,541 tons in 1997, through WFP<sup>34</sup>.

### **Political motive**

The characteristic of the Kim government’s unification policy is that it is a continuation of the previous Ro government’s policy of ‘Korean Peoples’ community unification scheme’. Not only has Kim continued the policy, but he has put it into action. With the foundation of ‘Korean Peoples’ community unification scheme’ the Kim government established a ‘3 steps policy’--accommodation and cooperation → South-North Union → unified nation, which is similar with Ro’s policy. Consequently, static policy became dynamic due to the famine of North Korea. In detail, the Kim government started to see North Korea as a counterpart to accommodate and cooperate under the condition of Ro government’s recognition of ‘mutual political system’. In other words, ‘Korean peoples’ community unification scheme’ which was the foundation of ‘National community unification scheme’ aimed to recover national community, i.e. emotional unification, by the cooperation of the South and North and

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<sup>34</sup> These figures do not include civilian aid by South Korean civil society.

then seek political unification accordingly.

Previous unification policies were concentrated on structural unification, based on a geographical, systematical, and political unification approach. The Kim government's policy, however, prioritized gradual progress by mutual interchange in culture, economy, society, et cetera. As a first step, Kim needed a carrot to attract North Korea to the conversation table in order to execute this policy. For the purpose of unification through accommodation and cooperation, the Kim government decided to use food aid as a means to promote the North-South relationship. Based on this political motive, on June 25, 1995, the 50th anniversary of the Korea War, the first shipment of 2,000 MT left in 1995 by Seapecs from Incheon port of South Korea.

The main direct motive for the Korean government to decide to donate 150,000 MT of food in 1995 was to relieve political tension around the Korean peninsula. Even though the Kim government had announced in its inauguration a unification scheme, the 'National community unification scheme' an approach of accommodation and cooperation, a nuclear development crisis occurred when North Korea declared its withdrawal from NPT (Nonproliferation Treaty) on March 1993, preventing Kim's unification policy from going into action. The risk of war between United States and North Korea started to grow and continued until North Korea decided to give up its nuclear development program in the *Geneva agreement* in 1994. During that period, there was no progress in Kim's unification scheme.

A mood of peace among South-North Korea and surrounding countries built by *Geneva agreement* gave the foundation for the Kim government to put its policy into action. As a result, along with the *Geneva agreement* on October 21<sup>st</sup>, the Kim government announced 'Cancellation of connection nuclear issue with economic cooperation', 'South-North active economic cooperation plan' on November 9<sup>th</sup> and allowed business people to visit North Korea in order to promote economic

cooperation for business. This activated relationship between South and North had been based on the 'South-North interchange law' of 1990. This law allowed forbidden activities such as contacts, correspondence, trade, and cooperate business between South and North for a unified nation.

After the *Geneva agreement*, President Kim started his policy to provide the North with food and other necessities from Berlin, on March 7<sup>th</sup> 1995. This was the first announcement of his intention to send food aid to the North. On May 15<sup>th</sup> at the opening ceremony of the Seoul general assembly of International Press Institute, he also announced his intention of food aid. According to a series of announcements from South Korea, on May 26<sup>th</sup>, Lee, Sunglock, chairman of the North Korean International Trade Promotion Committee, admitted food shortage in North Korea, and mentioned that North Korea could accept South Korea's food aid if there was no condition attached to it. So the South Korean chairman of National Unification Board announced that the South will help people in the North who are suffering from food shortage without any condition. As a result, from June 17<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup>, a task force team from the South and North held a conference in Beijing, China to set down detailed plans regarding food aid. Their agreement included the following:

As to help fellow country with food aid...the government announced the intention to help North Korean people without any condition...We made agreements as follow. 1. We will provide 150,000 Mt of food to North Korea with no charge. 2.....We will ship the first aid by ocean to Chungjin, Najin port. 3. The first aid food will be polished rice in 40kg package without any indication on the packaging.

As mentioned, the South Korean government accommodated almost all of North Korea's request. As a result, South Korea adjusted the aid amount from 50,000 tons to 150,000 MT and agreed that there would be no indication of origin of rice and no flags on the ship when South Korean ships carrying aid enter into the North Korean sea and its ports.

However, the South Korean government had shown its effort to maximize the effect of aid and its origin to North Korea and to the North Korean people. So, South Korea requested deletion of the non-indication of flag clause by agreement and the person to sign on the agreement had to be an official government agent to make the process official and mutually agreed on. Instead of one single large support effort, as requested by North Korea, South Korea suggested that one smaller scale, conditional support was preferred; and, after sending the first shipment of 50,000 MT, more aid could be discussed.

Considering the food aid agreement of South Korea, it demonstrates that food aid started from humanitarian motives. However, too much of a conciliatory attitude from South Korea in the negotiation process, and its outcome agreement on food aid to North Korea, influences a guess that there was another motive of aid. In fact, the Kim government was searching for a chance to normalize the relationship, severed since *funeral upheaval*<sup>35</sup> and the mood of peace generated in the Korean peninsula after *Geneva agreement* stimulated the Kim administration to offer more active and bold reconciliation gestures to try to normalize the South-North relationship and take the political initiative for the Korean peninsula. In other words, since 1993 the Kim administration was not only excluded from the process of resolving nuclear development program of North Korea but its relationship with the North worsened through *funeral upheaval*. Thus, Kim could not execute his unification policy properly and the Kim administration's disability regarding its unification policy brought criticism from the nongovernmental party and the masses.

In this process, President Kim was pressured politically to resolve this problem especially at the time of the expected local election, on May 27th. This political

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<sup>35</sup> On September 7, 1994, Kim, Ilsung's funeral day, South Korea government criticized United States about sending a condolence delegation to North Korean representatives staying in Geneva. After this, North Korea

motive behind food aid to North Korea was revealed in two government party candidates' election commitments. Jung, Wonsik, a candidate for Seoul mayor, and Lee, Injae, a candidate for provincial governor, pledged to promote North-South relationship right after a food carrier left South Korea for North Korea on June 25, 1995. It was even reported in a Japanese newspaper that the Korean government used food aid for political reasons (Kim, 2005:199). In addition, the Kim government tried to start food aid on June 25, being the Korean War Memorial Day, three days after the aid agreement in Beijing and planned an 'aid shipment ceremony' facilitated by Prime Minister Lee, honggu. However, these plans were criticized for using too much food aid fir political reasons (*Chosun-ilbo*, June 25, 1995). In short, pressure on the Kim administration at the Beijing conference to procure a political outcome regarding North Korea entangled South Korea in much concession, such as giving up monitoring to secure the transparency of distribution.

Besides these internal political motives of the Kim government, pending issues such as the release of the 'Woosung ship' and pastor Ahn, Seungwon, and building cooperation in agriculture, light industry and energy to support the economy of North Korea in the long term perspective, were suggested in the '2nd Beijing Conference' held on July 15-19. Although in the beginning of the food aid discussion both parties agreed on 'no conditions' attached to food aid, South Korea emphasized humanitarian motives for food aid. However, the Kim government inevitably had to bring up the above pending issues at the conference since they could not avoid criticism of weak negotiation by the government for the release of the kidnapped ship and person. Also for the development of a long-term relationship by building cooperation that will lead to successful reconciliation and cooperation, regarded as a beginning step for unification, the South Korean government hoped to discuss other issues at the '2nd

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criticized the South Korea's behavior and declared the severance of conversation with South Korea.

Beijing Conference’.

Food aid for North Korea was the first step for the final destination, the goal of unification. It was regarded as a means to bring North Korea to the table in order to discuss cooperation and reconciliation, and strengthen the political foundation of the Kim government.

### **Humanitarian motive**

Humanitarian aid can be defined as giving help in order to relieve an unfavorable situation of people who are in desperate circumstances caused by natural and human disasters and promoting their welfare without any discrimination based on politics, ideology, race, religion, et cetera. Humanitarian aid is also based on political neutrality, equality and independence with no conditions attached in order to achieve its universal goal, humanitarianism. However, in reality, international assistance has been changed from its original concept. The Kim government’s food aid to North Korea has been affected by emotional and racial factors, as well as the political and ideological factors mentioned earlier.

As we can see from the approach of the Kim government to North Korean policy, the Kim government started to emphasize humanitarianism as a motive of aid rather than ‘security’ or ‘anti-communism’ which governed the South Korean society since The Korean War. Humanitarian support based on nationalism became the foundation of food aid to North Korea. In fact, with the official appeal for food from North Korea and release of knowledge of the reality of famine in North Korea to South Korea through the national and international mass media, South Korea focused on humanitarian support; and, overall, public opinion evaluated food aid as a positive and desirable policy. The main reason for the South Korean government’s ability to make a decision to support North Korea in 1995 was that even under the extra-ordinary circumstance of nation separation, the desperate reality of North Korea, released

through national and international mass media, was enough to move the hearts of South Koreans to give aid to a suffering, homogenous ethnic nation, North Korea, with relatively unconditional terms.

Concepts like ‘Korean community’ or ‘National community’ emphasized by previous governments, and the Kim government, are based on the fact that the North and the South are a homogenous ethnic nation and therefore both nations should achieve unification. This is a main reason why the North and the South try to unify the country and the South gives aid. Thus, in the politics of South Korea, the unification issue has been the most important political agenda.

Especially, the 38<sup>th</sup> truce line formed after the Korean War made it completely impossible to exchange human and material communication between the South and North Korean people and, officially, created 125,375 *separated* families in the South Korea. The number of separated families, including displaced people and their relatives, are predicted to be 10 million. The official populations statistics show about 7.67 million people in 1996 and among them 1<sup>st</sup> generation figures are up to 1.23 million. Families were completely separated after the war in 1953, under the strict restriction of each government. In 1985 the first reunion took place through the Red Cross and from 2000, a routine, or periodic reunion was established. As a result, 8,266 separated people were able to meet their families (Integrated Information Center for Separated Families, 2005).

For Koreans separation is a tragedy resulting from The Korean War and a task to solve. In this sense, when famine occurred in North Korea, political and ideological conflict and difference in economy structure overwhelmed the concept of one ethnic group and made it possible to put the two countries together. In addition, when the 1984 flood occurred in South Korea, South Korea also received humanitarian food and

cement supports from North Korea. This relationship, based on a homogenous ethnic nation, was enough to become a motive to give aid when the South Korean people saw the North Korean people suffering from food shortage.

### **Reduced motivation for food aid support and its result**

The above mentioned motivation offered the Kim government possibility for the first time to provide food aid in 1995. However, several conflicts occurred in the aid shipment process and after the decision to donate food aid, it was impossible for South Korea to pursue bilateral aid; then, the Kim government chose the multilateral support method through WFP.

The first incident that created difficulty was the forcing of the North Korean government on the South Korean ship carrying food aid to fly a North Korean flag, on June 25, 1995. The South Korean government temporarily stopped further food aid shipments and announced food aid would not be executed until an official apology from the North Korean government was received. After Jeon, Keumchul made an official apology, the South Korean government resumed food aid. Another disrupting event followed. North Korea kidnapped Pastor Ahn, Seungwon, who worked as a missionary in China on July 9<sup>th</sup> stirring up criticism from the masses. In the conference held after the above two incidents on July 10<sup>th</sup>, members of the national assembly censured the food aid policy of the Kim government, and the North Korean flag incident on the ship, Seeapex. On the question of unification, national security and international relations issue, Park, Myunghwan, the ruling party, pointed out “While Japan indicated the origin of the foods and banned military use of, or sales of aid food, we provided rice without any indication of its origin and no condition was imposed”. Japan asked about any back up plans if and when the food aid would be diverted for military use (*Chosun-ilbo*, June 10, 1995). And Lee, Jongchan, the non-government party, criticized “Why did members of department of finance and

economy within the Blue House conduct food aid negotiations with the skillful North Korean negotiators?” and asked for the punishment of responsible people and the resignation of the Prime Minister and related ministers (Ibid).

Prime Minister Lee, Honggu and Minister of Unification Na, Woongbae answered “The purpose for food aid was good but there were some problems in negotiation process” and “We fully realize the responsibility.” In addition Prime Minister Lee said, “We will conduct food aid according to peoples’ opinion.”(*Chosun-ilbo*, July 11, 1995).

The second incident affected the bilateral food aid policy of the South Korean government, known as *photo shoot incident* by a crew of ‘Samsun Venus’, one of the ships transporting food aid to North Korea. North Korea claimed that Lee, Yangchun, the first officer of ‘Samsun Venus’ took some pictures of Chungjin port for the purpose of espionage, they detained the ship, along with 21 crew members and asked for an official apology from the South Korean government. North Korea also announced its absence from the 3<sup>rd</sup> Beijing conference set up for the discussion of additional food aid and practical issues. The Beijing conference was postponed without any time limit and the remaining food aid was stopped as well.

After this incident, the South Korean parties, press and the masses criticized the Kim government policy for the detention of crews, followed by the *North Korean flag incident*. Critics expected North Korea to express its thanks for food aid, instead. In addition, when UNICEF staff tried to enter North Korea to investigate sales of aid food, they were denied access. A South Korean newspaper reported this incident and that UNICEF would not proceed with additional food aid to North Korea until this incident is clarified. These negative incidents caused heavy criticism of the food aid policy in South Korean society.

As a result the press and national assembly raised concerns on the basis of the policy of food aid, criticized the irresponsible attitude of the government during the

process of transportation and aid decision, including the diversion problem of aid food and heavy priority on domestic political motives. Finally, the South Korean government announced there would be no additional support after completing shipment of the remaining 150,000 MT of food (*Chosun-ilbo*, August 17, 1995). The Minister of Unification Lee, Soosung, determined that if North Korea takes an antagonistic and negative attitude of South Korea's assistance, it will be hard to support North Korea any more. But he did not mention that if minimum prerequisites like official aid requests from North Korea, favorable discussion and agreement between South and North Korea, stop antagonistic behaviors and libel against South Korea, the South Korean government will support and cooperate, with the inclusion of food aid (Ibid, July 11, 1997). In addition, at the 'North Korea food aid policy conference' attended by Korea, the United States, and Japan, in Hawaii on January 14<sup>th</sup> 1996, all three countries agreed upon North Korean support through international organizations, private organizations, and religious organizations. Food aid will be continued, on the basis of clarifying the usage of the food, but bilateral government food aid will not be provided anymore.

After this conference, considering North Korea's famine, the Kim government encouraged private support by civil organizations or religious groups and participated in a UN appeal to North Korea--3,409 tons in 1996, 68,541 tons in 1997--but governmental aid stopped and assistance through WFP was not as large as before.

### **2.2.2 Kim, Daejung administration's *sunshine policy*: 1998~2002**

The first president from the opposition party, Kim, Daejung (hereinafter DJ) conducted more active North Korean policies than the previous Kim, Youngsam government. With a comprehensive policy, called '*sunshine policy*', the South Korean government actively supported North Korea through international organizations, private

organizations and government. Through WFP in 1998 40,000 MT, 100,000 MT each in 2001 and 2002 were supported. In 2000 and 2002, 500,000 MT and 400,000 MT of rice were provided to North Korea as a loan. And, from private sources, up to \$1.93 million worth of food, medical supplies, and development and relief equipment were given.

The first principle of the '*sunshine Policy*' is to bring peace to the Korean peninsula through a parallel pursuit of security and cooperation. During the previous Kim, Youngsam government, North Korea conducted armed provocations like the *Gangreung Submarine incident* and these antagonistic attitudes of North Korea discourage and jeopardized the intention of the South Korean government to give support. The DJ government tried to prevent military provocations from North Korea with enhanced security and military power of South Korea and through separation of politics and economy. DJ reasoned that political and military confrontations do not affect efforts for building cooperation, and reconciliation through economic or social exchanges ultimately bring peace and unification in Korean peninsula.

Second, based on the principle of mutuality, support to North Korea should contribute mutual benefits and eventually mutual development and prosperity. The Kim, Youngsam government confirmed that just humanitarianism would not change North Korea. Based on this lesson DJ stepped away one step from nationalism and humanitarian approach and tried to induce changes of North Korea and contribution to development of mutual exchange and economical development.

Third, with an effort to secure international supports DJ focused on securing support from the domestic sector. Kim, Youngsam government's political motive of food aid caused negative effects. So, considering the specialty of international politics of Korean peninsula DJ tried to harmonize domestic opinion with international opinion with regard to North Korean famine relief operations.

## **Political motive**

On February 25<sup>th</sup> 1998, the government of DJ announced in an inaugural address that the government and private organization would continue to support North Korea with food aid in a rational way and emphasized that the government would resolve the North Korean food crisis as a priority task of new government. Even when the South Korean people were critical, due to the *North Korean flag* and *detention of 'Samsun Venus'* incidents in 1995, DJ asserted the necessity of humanitarian supports. However, he also could not completely free himself from domestic and international opinion. In the beginning of DJ's administration he could not provide aid through international organization due to the political pressure caused by a series of armed provocations from North Korea.

Generally, the new president had to review all the social, economy, culture, diplomatic, unification policies created by previous government. It was the reason why the new government took similar policies in the beginning of the administration. The policies of the DJ government in 1998 were not much different from Kim, Youngsam government's unification policy. In other words, although DJ pledged that he would make the effort to assist North Korea in order to relieve famine, the DJ government in 1998 provided just 50,000 Mt of corn support as he witnessed the failure of the previous government. In order to minimize the burden, he channeled support through WFP and just focused on encouraging private organization activities.

Based on the principle of mutuality, DJ government emphasized the duty of North Korea in return for food aid. The government asserted that North Korea has to be responsible and passionate toward peaceful unification of the Korean peninsula in order to enable food aid. As food aid is commonly accompanied by a monitoring issue, the receiver has to be responsible and perform its duties in terms of transparency and accountability in order to create a positive public opinion from the people of the donor

countries. So, the DJ government made a large effort with respect to monitoring and securing clarity in order to avoid the criticism that the Kim, Youngsam government had suffered. But, as the social structure of North Korea is still locked out, they were hard tasks to perform in reality.

The continued provocations of North Korea, also in 1998, inevitably made the DJ government to stop to pursue active food aid policy. After the South Korean government decided to support 50,000 MT of corn, North Korea did not stop to provoke armed incidents: for instance, on June 8<sup>th</sup> 1998, invasion of Northern Boundary Line in West sea; June 22<sup>nd</sup>, submarine invasion to east sea; July 12<sup>th</sup>, infiltration of armed spies; August 31<sup>st</sup>, test launching of Daepodong missile; November 20<sup>th</sup>, infiltration of spy ship in Kanghwa island; December 17<sup>th</sup> submarine invasion on Yeusoo coast etc. North Korea constantly conducted unfaithful actions in 1998 which weakened the position of the DJ government for North Korean support. As a result, from 1999, South Korea stopped all the supports conducted by government and international organizations, except only allowing humanitarian support through private organizations.

With North Korea constantly provoking actions, a monetary crisis caused by the shortage in foreign exchange reserve at the end of 1997 was another main reason to stop North Korean support. A series of bankruptcy, lost credibility, significant increase of short-term loans, et cetera, happened in 1997. Hence, South Korea submitted an application for relief loans to receive \$19.5 billion from International Monetary Fund (IMF), \$7 billion from the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) and \$3.7 billion from the Asian Development Bank (ADB) to overcome a foreign currency crisis. In order to overcome this foreign currency crisis, the DJ government enacted a high interest policy and reduced the budget to stabilize inflation, current account surplus policy through demand restriction. As a result, on September

1999, DJ started to redeem a debt earlier than the expected date and the economy started to recover, from January 2001.

These economic crises prevented the DJ government from securing funds for North Korea supports. In 1990, the Ro government established the South-North Cooperation Fund through the South-North Cooperation Law in order to promote human exchange and economic cooperation between South and North Korea.

**Table 4.2 North-South Korea cooperation fund (Million Korean Won)**

Year	Government Contribution	Private Contribution	Earning from application of funds	Public funds	Sum
1991	25,000	-	237	-	25,237
1992	40,000	-	5,118	-	45,118
1993	40,000	3	4,778	-	44,781
1994	40,000	1	9,387	-	49,388
1995	240,000	119	14,589	-	254,708
1996	100,000	132	18,410	-	118,542
1997	50,000	288	27,874	-	78,162
1998	-	-	40,280	-	40,280
1999	-	3	23,013	149,831	172,847
2000	100,000	542	30,392	254,852	385,786
2001	500,000	1,080	29,406	310,000	840,486
2002	490,000	542	42,036	505,000	1,037,114
2003	300,000	78	46,515	823,000	1,169,516
2004	171,000	1	38,371	310,000	519,772
SUM	2,096,400	2,246	330,406	2,352,683	4,781,735

Source: Unification White Paper, 2005:142

But, as we can see from above table, the government cut its budget in 1998 and 1999 in order to overcome the foreign currency crisis and as a result, there were very little available funds for North Korea food aid. On September 1999, the Korean government redeemed all high interest loans and on August 23<sup>rd</sup> 2001, all loans were paid off to overcome the foreign currency crisis. After the South-North Summit Conference, held on June 13-15, 2000, the relationship was revived and government contributions for South-North Cooperation Funds increased significantly.

The DJ government did not allow governmental and international support until 1999. In Berlin on March 9, 2000, DJ announced the Berlin Declaration, aimed to support the recovery of the North Korean economy, cessation of antagonistic

confrontation between the North and the South relationship and settlement of peace, resolution of dispersed families, communications and exchange of special envoy. This active North Korean policy finally made historical a moment of the 'South-North summit conference' from June 13<sup>th</sup> to June 15<sup>th</sup> 2000. It was the first summit meeting after The Korean War and t both decided for peaceful unification, which made it more important. They agreed on '6.15 cooperation agreement' which was to 'increase cooperation between governments, resolution of dispersed families and political prisoners, balanced economic development of the Korean peninsula through economy cooperation, cooperation and active correspond on social, culture, sports, environment, et cetera.

Under this normalized relationship, on August 15<sup>th</sup> the first exchange of dispersed families was conducted for regular visits, for humanitarian purposes. The South and North Korean governments exchanged special envoys to discuss detail factors for exchange and collaboration between two nations. As a result, on September 15<sup>th</sup>, both agreed on the joint entrance of South and North athletes for the Sydney Olympics and on September 18<sup>th</sup> the Kyungeui railway reconnection ground-breaking ceremony took place. All these detail factors which started after the South-North Summit Conference and details were discussed at a Ministers Conference held on July, August and September 2000.

In 2000, while these collaboration interchanges were actively conducted, North Korea was still suffering food shortage because of draught in 100 years. According to a North Korea report, 1 million MT of food was reduced and an additional 400,000 MT was to be reduced due to hurricane. As a result the North Korean government appealed to South Korea for 1 million MT of food loan on September 8<sup>th</sup>, 2000.

**Table 4.3 FAO/ WFP crop and food supply assessment to DPRK (1,000 MT)**

	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99	1999-00	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05
National output	4,077	2,995	2,663	3,481	3,420	2,573	3,656	3,840	4,156	4,235
Total needs	5,988	5,359	4,614	4,835	4,751	4,769	4,957	4,921	5,100	5,132
Shortage	1,911	2,364	1,951	1,354	1,331	2,196	1,301	1,084	944	897
Commercial import	700	500	700	300	210	100	100	100	100	100
Aid	630	660	760	840	586	1,532	819	300	300	300
Absolute shortage	581	1,204	491	214	535	564	382	684	404	497

Source: FAO/WFP, "Special Report: FAO/WFP Crop and Food Supply Assessment Mission to DPRK"

Nov.22, 2004

During the 3<sup>rd</sup> South-North Ministers Conference the South Korean government announced it would provide 500,000 tons of food as loan and a loan contract was signed on October 4<sup>th</sup> between the Korea Export Import Bank and Chosun Trade Bank.

Since 150,000 MT of support in 1995, the motives involved in deciding to provide food aid up to more than 3 times of food provided previously, mentioned was the favorable relationship between South and North Korea, the desperate situation of North Korea, and recovery of the South Korean economy from 2000. However, the DJ government's food aid motive was the same as the Kim Youngsam administration. In other words, as mentioned above, South-North collaboration interchanges activated since 6.15 Summit Conference made South Korea unable to refuse the request from the North Korean government. The concern that it would jeopardize the favorable relationship between the two if South Korean government refused the request of food aid of North Korea became a decisive factor, making it possible to provide food aid to North Korea. This is indicated on loan contract between South and North Korean

government that it was an inevitable decision of South Korean government to support North Korea. The introduction of the food loan contract showed that the food loan had been decided on the basis of a strong political motive. The food loan contract states: “South and North Korea will diligently conduct ‘6.15 Cooperation Announcement’ and based on the principle of mutuality, the food loan between South and North Korea was made” (Unification White Paper, 2000)

But for the actual contents of the contract regarding food loan, there are only the responsibilities of South Korea listed, and no responsibilities for the receiving party, North Korea, which makes this deal not much different from the Kim, Youngsam government. DJ asserted on September 30<sup>th</sup> “As North Korea is suffering from food crisis and as far as North Korea requests, we need to support them with humanitarianism and nationalism” (*Chosun-ilbo*, October 1, 2000). His address means that North Korean food aid has been decided by political and humanitarian motives like Kim, Youngsam’s government but the only difference is that it was made based in the mood of cooperation and reconciliation between North and South Korea.

The reason why North and South Korea decided to provide a loan type of food aid has reflected the political motivation of both nations. First, given a loan type of food, North Korea can avoid or reject the monitoring term or attachment of other conditions on the contract because it is not free aid but an economic contract which a debtor nation will pay back in a termed period. The DJ government also agreed with North Korea on a loan contract-payment in 30 years with a 10-year grace period with an interest rate of 1.0%. This loan contract made South Korea as well as North Korea free from monitoring and related complicated conditions. When the South Korean government first announced the loan type of food aid, North Korean experts in South Korea strongly suggested free aid with the term of monitoring, to see whether provided food is, in fact, distributed to targeted people. Ko, Ildong, Korea Development

Institute (KDI) senior researcher, also said, “If it is a loan type, North Korean government can freely distribute to any place. In order to confirm that the foods are distributed to the right people, we have to offer free humanitarian aid, not a loan.” (*Chosun-ilbo*, September 28, 2000). But this criticism did not draw much attention from the masses and the non-government party, both in the mood of reconciliation and cooperation established by DJ’s *Sunshine policy*.

Even if it was a loan type of food aid, compared to West Germany’s policy to East Germany with a loan condition Libor (London interest rate) + 1%, payment term 5 years with no grace period, South Korea’s loan term, 30 years payment and 10 years grace period with 1 % interest rate, is almost close to free aid; and the repayment condition of “Repayment can be paid with cash or goods or any other method of payment that benefits mutually” (North Korea Food loan Contract, 2000:15) is ambiguous in term, making it possible to expect that South Korea does not have intention of redemption of loan. In terms of the political system, the DJ government could make this aid decision which is almost the same unconditional aid to North Korea as the Kim, Youngsam government made because there was no clear law to check the government’s unification policy. The unification policy under the president-lead political system follows the decision of the president. For providing loans, it requires agreement of the National Assembly but in the case of North Korean support, even if it is a type of loan, because the cost of the loan is executed from the South-North Cooperation Fund, it does not require agreement from the National Assembly; it just requires approval after agreement (National Unification Advisory Council, 2000). Therefore the absence of the political system to check the authority of the president, and criticism by the political counterpart under the mood of reconciliation and cooperation formed after the Summit Conference in 2000, resulted in limiting the effect of food aid.

The fact that there was more rice than corn indicates that the political motive to normalize the relationship between the North and the South was a major determinant in the decision making process. In other words, despite critics for supporting rice which is not a main food of the vulnerable as well as expensive by 2 times more than corn, the South Korean government decided to aid rice. This fact means the DJ government fully reflected North Korea's request not to ruin the peaceful mood formed by the Summit Conference. Against this criticism, the Ministry of Unification's only mention was, "North Korea wanted rice as well" and private relief and aid organizations criticized, "The chances for rice to be distributed to North Korean people in food shortage are much lower than corn. By aiding rice, the DJ government limited themselves by ensuring the transparency of distribution" (*Chosun-ilbo*, September 29, 2000). With regard to monitoring issue, South Korean government only agreed verbally "In order to secure transparency of distribution, both nations try to secure that the mutual efforts will be done" not as a paper agreement.

Other than that, in the contract they indicated not to use Korean flags on ships, not to print the word '대한민국(Korea)' in Korean but in English 'Republic of Korea' on the rice packages, and corn is not to be packaged. Just like the food aid of the Kim, Youngsam government in 1995, the DJ administration limited themselves ensuring transparency of distribution, for political motivation. Indicating the origin of the supporting food is a common right for a donor country and an important means for ensuring transparency of distribution. More distribution transparency can be secured when food is in a package rather than in bulk. Providing a package type of donation could also contribute to create criticizing power within the beneficiary group by their recognition of their failure and the receipt of relief assistance from outside. As North Korea well acknowledges, these factors, in order to avoid the international norm

regarding food aid and monitoring, the North took advantage of the DJ government, eager to have a good relationship with North Korea.

Loan type North Korean support lowered the burden of monitoring for both South and North Korea and it was evaluated as a politically motivated support to maintain good relationship. According to the North-South Conference Explanation Paper (2000-15), the South Korea government expected that food loan will contribute to a resolution of the dispersed families and improvement of the South and North Korean relationship. As a result, the food loan, which fully reflected the request of North Korea, was made on the basis of too much political motivation. It failed to ensure transparency of distribution and induced changes within beneficiary groups by simply pouring international aid into the closed North Korean society.

In 2001, after the occurrence of 9.11 in the United States, North Korea was called by the USA as an 'axis of evil' and the negative recognition of North Korea expanded. Under this situation, South Korea could not continue to support North Korea any longer. As South-North economic cooperation and exchange was getting better in 2002, another 400,000 MT of rice was provided as a loan to North Korea.

Discussion for a food loan contract in 2002 began when North Korea requested it at 2<sup>nd</sup> South-North Economy Cooperation Committee on August 30, 2002 and on September 16<sup>th</sup> the loan agreement was signed. The same as the 2000 support, the 2002 support had a political background as well. While negotiation for rail and road to connect South and North was being conducted in the South-North Economy Cooperation Committee, North Korea requested food aid. South Korea could not reject this request because connected rail and road which had been divided by The Korean War had a significant meaning in Korean history, as well as for the DJ government's political achievement. Thus the negotiation came to an agreement point on August 30<sup>th</sup> and followed by signing of the food loan agreement on September, 16,

two days before the road connecting ceremony, on September 18, 2002. Although the food loan was obviously compensation for the political deal, it, however, had been buried under the political outcome. In other words, at those times, the South Korean press, public opinion and political parties did not indicate the problem of food loan which incorporated little differences from 1995 food aid and 2000 food loan (*Chosun-ilbo* review, September-August, 2002). Contrary to 1995 and 2000 food supply, there was 'no criticism' from the press and National Assembly and the public opinion with 2002 support (Ibid). South Korea only focused on the new road and railroad that will connect South and North Korea.

With regard to the monitoring issue of the 2002 food loan, South Korea agreed that the 'Korea' be clearly indicated in the Korean language on the packaging, and for every 100,000 MT, North Korea will report the distribution of the food within 30 days and allow South Korea to monitor the process of distribution. The DJ government made an improvement in the monitoring issue but it fell far short of what other countries adopt to their aid program. Thus the historical event of connecting road and rail between South and North drew a veil over the defects of food loan.

### **International motive**

In the beginning, the DJ government decided to support 30,000 MT of corn and 10,000 MT of flour through WFP by August 1998. These supports were conducted under the motive of South Korea to join international aid community by participating in international appeal. Food aid through WFP in 1998 was decided in 1997 and executed in 1998. However, continual armed provocations by North Korea in 1998 made South Korea cease all assistances including aid through WFP in 1999.

The DJ government provided food aid through both bilateral and multilateral ways. There were two motives: when the North-South Korea's relationship worsens, 1) as the DJ government has difficulty pursuing bilateral aid, aided through WFP, DJ tries to

minimize internal criticism from civil organizations and political counter party for doing nothing for North Koreans for food shortage; 2) when the relationship improves, DJ intends to show the international community that his government is participating in international effort to relieve famine in North Korea. In short, the decision of aid method is decided by North-South Korean relations. Under DJ's *Sunshine policy*, the aim to unify the Korean peninsula considers food aid policy as one of the tactics to promote a South-North relationship.

### **Economic motive**

500,000 MT in 2000 and 400,000 MT in 2002 were a decision to reflect the economic motive of South Korea. 'As it was supported in loan type' the South Korea government announced, 'it will help the settlement of business relationship between South and North as well as contribute to the humanitarian purpose. This is also expected to promote the establishment of South-North economic community' (Unification White Paper, 2003:192). On 2<sup>nd</sup> at the South-North Ministers Conference on September 1, 2000, both parties announced;

In order to expand and develop economic cooperation, South and North make a system to promote investment and prevent double taxation. And in order to relieve North Korean's hardness, review the possibility of food loan to North Korea (Unification White Paper, 2003: 522)

As shown above, South Korea used the support as an opportunity to increase economic interchange. In fact, the food loan of South Korea opened the opportunity for South Korean companies to enter North Korea after the South-North Summit Conference in 2000.

The decision of food loan to North Korea had the motive to dispose surplus rice, as well. As a result of six fruitful years, a change in the eating habits of South Korean people occurred, and increased rice import, stock rice was more than double of the proper amount, 1.92 million MT, which includes Government's purchasing in 2001

(Hong, 2001). In addition, as rice cultivating has a low income property, the income of farmer families will decrease more without government's price support policy. Also due to Free Trade Agreement (FTA), South Korea had to import 4% of its total domestic consumptions from 2004. As a result, the warehousing costs for stocked rice expected 607 billion Korean Won a year, not including financial charges (Ibis). Surplus of rice in South Korea affected the food loan to North Korea and this motive is supported by government archives: "2002 food loan was decided on the basis of rice supply and demand status of South Korea,... warehousing and management aspect, market economy and discussion on the protection of farmers' interest" (Unification White Paper, 2003: 193). This shows that as other donor countries used food aid as a tool to protect or promote their national and international market, the DJ government also started to consider the economic motive as a variable to decide food aid.

### **3. Different Motives and Different Outcomes**

As previously examined, the food aid policy of the Kim, Youngsam regime which started food aid to North Korea in 1995 and that of the Kim, Daejung regime which provided food aid to North Korea in the form of a loan were affected by political, humanitarian, economic and international political motives. If that is the case, what may be the changes which food aid to North Korea has brought, based on such motives? Evaluation of its impact on North Korea will be an important job in determining the future course of South Korea's policy toward North Korea.

#### **Political Motives: Did it contribute to promote peace on the Korean peninsula?**

As a condition to the unification policy for the Korean peninsula, which aims at promoting reconciliation and understanding between the South and North through mutual exchanges and realization of a peaceful unification on the basis of such, a conditional aid, i.e., an evaluation of the food aid to the North based on the political

motive and its influence which will induce the North to the dialogue table, will have to be preceded. The policies of unification, defense and national security are the elements that determine success or failure in a presidential election in South Korea. In Korea, characterized by presidential government, the president and the Administration exercise a far greater power than the parliament. The people's interest in the unification of the peninsula, its significance in the Korean politics, and the characteristics of the political system in the South have resulted in making food aid to North Korea, on the basis of a political motive. As examined previously, president Kim, Youngsam of the Civilian Government which was launched in 1993, internally on the basis of the democratization and industrialization since The Korean war and externally in peaceful circumstances formed in the Korean peninsula since the conclusion of the Geneva Conventions in 1994, had been put under pressure to improve the relationship between the South and North, which became the motive in determining a 150,000 MT of food aid to the North.

Similarly, we can not rule out the possibility that there was a consideration for the food aid to North Korea behind the scenes of the rapid progress made by the Kim, Daejung government in normalizing the South-North relationship, and in expanding exchanges between South and North under its engagement policy toward the North. That is to say, in connection with the smooth maintenance of the minister-level South-North talks where issues like activation of South-North exchanges were discussed since the summit talk between the two and at the talks on the matter of connecting roads between the South and North, the North, at opportune times, requested the South to provide food aid to the North, and South Korea led the important talks smoothly by responding to such requests. In this way, to the government of South Korea, food aid to North Korea was a first step toward such policy and was perceived as a card that can relax the locked South-North relationship. South Korea's motive, to give food aid

to North Korea, because, though suffering from food shortage, North Korea which had been concerned about the impact that might be exerted upon the ruling system of North Korea through claims that might be made by international organizations or civilian bodies regarding the transparency in their relief activities or by the activities that might be conducted throughout North Korea for the purpose of estimating the food demand for North Korea, North Korea was made to perceive South Korea as a financial resource through which it could make up for their food shortage. As a result, this type of conflict of political interests accomplished food aid to North Korea through a bilateral aid system instead of a multilateral aid system adopted by international organizations.

It is not easy to isolate from other variables the impact which food aid to North Korea exerted upon the South-North relationship, and evaluate its impact. However, as we can see from the analysis done previously, the food aid issue was always taken up as an agenda on the negotiating table on which the South and North discussed the matter of increasing exchanges as a way of relaxing tension between the two Koreas, and the government of South Korea, by accepting the idea to give food aid to North Korea, was able to enter into an agreement with the North regarding activation of economic exchanges between the South and North, South's commencement of sight-seeing travel to Mt. Geumgang, opening of a land route connecting the South and North, and et cetera, and based on the agreement, exchanges between the South and North were increased at a rapid speed. Also, those exchanges, which had worked for a better understanding and which increased the trust between the South and North, resulted in making it possible for South Korea to do business with North Korea.<sup>36</sup> In consequence, the government of Kim, Daejung could put an end to the antagonistic

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<sup>36</sup> Refer to "Statistics on Unification" in the homepage of the Ministry of Unification for statistics regarding the South-North exchanges, cooperation projects, and humanitarian projects. <http://www.unikorea.go.kr/index.jsp>

relationship between the South and North that had been formed between the two since the Korean war, and unfold policies toward North Korea in an aggressive manner on the basis of a peaceful coexistence that could be sought through reconciliation and increased exchanges, and North Korea showed a sincere attitude to make a contribution to forming trust between the South and North by putting an end to armed military skirmishes that had been provoked by the North until then.

**Humanitarian Motives: separated families and nutritional improvement of the targeted beneficiaries**

The aid to North Korea given on the basis of the humanitarian motive that the South and North are a unitary nation exerted a decisive influence in making the reunion of separated families a regular event. The South-North relationship which started to develop in a positive direction at very rapid speed since the issue of the 6.15 joint statement in 2000 made the two parties come to an agreement at the second South-North minister-level meeting to hold the second and third meetings for reunion of separated families in succession to its first reunion event held on August 15, 2000, and it was at the said second South-North minister-level meeting that the issue of the food aid to North Korea also was agreed upon. Prior to the said meeting, South Korea had closed-door meetings with North Korea over the period between April 23, 1999 and June 3, 1999 to provide the North with 200,000 tons of fertilizer in return for holding reunion events for separated families and agreed to start holding South-North vice minister-level talks from June 21, 1999 to take up the issues of mutual interest with their priority given to the aid of 200,000 tons of fertilizer to the North and to the reunion of separated families. However, because the North Korean Navy provoked on June 15, 1999 a military action at a place close to the northern borderline on the Western Sea of the Korean peninsula, the reunion of the separated families was ruined. Conclusively, the South Korean government, by linking the humanitarian motive to

the reunion of separated families to food aid to the North, resumed the deadlocked talks on the reunion of separated families and achieved the result of making the reunion of separated families a regular event.

Food aid to the North based on the humanitarian motive made a contribution, in a humanitarian point of view, to improvement of nutritional state of the class suffering from food shortage. The efforts made by international organizations such as WFP, WHO, UNDP, UNICEF, FAO, UNFFA, OCHA, IFR and etc. and the various programs such as food aid, agricultural development, improvement of health and medical services, technological support for forestry and protection of environments, expansion of social infrastructure and et cetera, of international and South Korea’s nongovernmental organizations (NGO) such as ADRA(Switzerland), CESVI(Italy), Campus(Switzerland), Triangle(France), Concern(Ireland), GAA(Germany), Handicap International(Belgium), PMU(Sweden), Premiere Urgence( France), and Save the Children could be regarded as the elements that contributed to the relaxation of North Korea’s food shortage.

**Table 4.3 Child nutrition survey of DPRK**

	1998 <sup>1)</sup>	2002 <sup>2)</sup>
Number of samples	1,762	5,982
Ages of Samples	6 months - < 7 years	0 month - <7 years
Wasting (%)	15.6	8.1
Stunting (%)	62.3	39.2
Underweight (%)	60.6	20.2

Source: 1) EU·UNICEF·WFP, Nutrition Survey of the DPRK, 1998

2) UNICEF·WFP· Central Bureau of Statistics DPRK, Report on the DPRK Nutrition Assessment, 2002

As we can see from the above table, the North Korea support programs that have been continued by the International community and South Korea since 1995 have contributed to improvement of the nutritional state of North Korean people. As international organizations like WFP execute their programs with transparency in

distribution as a precondition for their aid, it is possible to check whether the food provided by them is delivered to the targeted group and, resultantly, to evaluate that a food aid provided has contributed to the improvement of their health. WFP actually conducted thorough monitoring under the principle of ‘no access, no food,’ and were able to conduct monitoring almost over the entire areas related to their programs. In the year of 2000, of the 206 areas in North Korea, WFP was denied access to 43 areas (WFP, Emergency Report No. 49), and food was not able to be distributed to these areas because access to them was denied. In spite of such thorough monitoring conducted by WFP there had been unceasing criticism that the food provided was not delivered to the intended beneficiaries but flowed to military units or non-deserving groups. Still more, the South Korean government, by accommodating the North’s requests for unconditional aid when it provided loans or food aid to the North, gave up or limited, of its own accord, its efforts to secure transparency in distribution by specifying in the monitoring condition as “Both parties shall make efforts to secure transparency in distribution.” (National Unification Advisory Council, 2000). It was not until 2003 that the South Korean government could conduct monitoring on the distribution scenes though at the weak level by specifying in the monitoring condition as “In connection with the matter of visiting the distribution scenes, visits shall be made in September to the scenes distributing 100,000 MT of rice which was already provided to the North, the places to visit shall be 3 in the eastern and western coastal regions and the visitors to the scenes shall be 3 in number” (The text of minutes of the 6<sup>th</sup> meeting of the South-North Economic Cooperation Promotion Committee). However, the policy of monitoring adopted by the South Korean government falls very much short of the international norm applied by international organizations like WFP, and it is very clear that the way in which visits are made to the scenes in the eastern and western coastal regions and in some inland regions more than once at each time

when each 100,000 tons of rice have been delivered to the North is also considered excessively poor in securing transparency in distribution. Regarding the monitoring system of the South Korean government, Mr. Lee, Yonghwan (2005), a team leader at Citizen's Alliance for North Korean Human Rights, pointed out, "The professional knowledge of the visitors was low and it was only a showy but worthless policy without detailed guidelines or procedures." He offered a case in which university students who were sent for a monitoring to be conducted in accordance with the said text of the minutes had a tour of the whole areas of North Korea and came back<sup>37</sup>. Also, as the South Korean government has been handling lightly the matter of writing a report on how monitoring was done, it is, in actuality, not possible to evaluate how the food provided by the South Korean government is used in North Korea, i.e., whether it made a contribution to the improvement of the nutritional state of North Koreans.

### **Economic Motive: economic effects of food aid to North Korea**

In the action stage of the program food aid to North Korea affected directly or indirectly the economies of South and North Korea. First, as an indirect effect, food aid made possible economic cooperation between the South and North. The launching of economic cooperation between the South and North has been producing economic benefits for both parties by increasing economic trade between South and North Korea. Presently, the economic cooperation is in its infant stage, but the prospects for future cooperation are positive. Mr. Hong, Soonjik (2004), head of Northeast Asia Analysis Team of Hyundai Research Institute, stated in its report titled 'Economic Effect in Developing the Industrial Estate in Gaeseong City and the Problems that should be Solved for its Success' that North Korea would be able to

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<sup>37</sup> Interview: Interview with the team head Mr. Lee, Yonghwan of Citizens' Alliance for Human Rights of North Korea, Dec. 22, 2005.

produce an economic outcome four times bigger than the combined figure of its total 2002 government budget and trade volume, during the first nine years of the Gaeseong Industrial Estate Development Project. Moreover, analysis showed that the Project, by producing for South Korean economy an yearly added value of US\$ 1.64 billion, would bring about the result of increasing its GDP by about 0.3 % point, and the mere saving of labor cost would reduce the manufacturing cost by about 10%. In other words, the analysis further showed that the Gaeseong Industrial Estate Development Project carries very great weight in that Gaeseong development will in the short term improve the high-cost and low-efficiency structure of the Korean economy and relax the deindustrialization of its manufacturing industry, and in the mid-to-long term it would provide a beachhead for South Korea which is currently “an island of economy” to make inroads into the Continent of Asia and Europe and to realize its plan to become a Southeast economic hub. Resultantly, food aid to North Korea did not exert a direct influence upon South Korea’s economy but provided an opportunity to make possible economic exchanges indirectly between the two Koreas.

Secondly, what we can point out as a direct influence is the proliferation of the perception on the market economy in North Korea. On July 1, 2002 North Korea started to implement ‘7.1 Economic Improvement Measure’, through which it tried to readjust prices and wages to a realistic level. It is a measure taken to absorb into the public area the black markets which started to mushroom after the economic impasse suffered by North Korea, and under the North Korean regime North Korea could not help but give a tacit permission for the formation of markets since its public distribution system (PDS) was disintegrated. According to an interview with one of the defectors from Pyeongannam-do of North Korea (Kim, Okbyul, 2005) the public distribution system which had started with the reduction in the amount of rationed rice in 1991 came to a complete stop in 1994, and as the result of the disintegration of the

PDS primitive markets started to be formed where most of the people in villages bartered household effects and rice with each other on the black market or exchanged on the black market special products produced in their region for rice.<sup>38</sup> The North Korean regime, by intensifying indoctrination of ‘self-rehabilitation’ spirit into the minds of the people, pursued a policy asking its people to solve the matter of obtaining rice on their own and not to rely on the central distribution system. Upon review of ‘*Nodong- shinmoon*’ it was found out that the paper emphasized bringing to the fore slogans such as ‘self-rehabilitation’ and ‘march of trials’ as if it would verify a change in the policy of North Korea that people themselves should try to solve the problem of food shortage.

Though the large amount of food provided for North Korea by international community and South Korea was distributed through the PDS under such situation, traces were captured that the food provided in a way in which the transparency in distribution of it was not able to be secured was traded through different channels at the market. For example, according to a witness by a North Korean defector, the price of rice on the market went down by 25%-30% between March 1998 and September 1998 when food aid to North Korea began (Lee, Geumsoon, 2003: 89). There are many other analyses which show that food aid pulled down the prices of rice on the black market. Given that difficulty of obtaining food in North Korea arises from non-availability of entitlement to food caused under the unique system of North Korea, activation of markets is known to have contributed to strengthening of people’s entitlement to food. Mr. Lee, Seungyong (2005)<sup>39</sup>, head of the Peace and Human Rights division of “Good Friends” which is one of the organizations supporting North Korea opined that the influence exerted upon enhancement of North

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<sup>38</sup> Interview: Interview with a defector from North Korea, Dec. 15, 2005.

<sup>39</sup> Interview: Interview with Lee, Seungyong, Dec. 27, 2005.

Korean's entitlement to food and upon the change in their perception are the positive aspects of food aid to North Korea. He said:

It is a narrow-minded interpretation of the meaning of food aid to trace the channel of rice and to emphasize the importance of the result of such efforts. For example, if the rice offered in aid of North Korea is delivered to a North Korean port and is distributed there, the price of rice on the market falls. This has an effect of facilitating purchase of rice on the part of the people....In addition, that the rice is sold at the market means also a change to the socialist system of North Korea. In other words, it is a start of market economy and its impact is really great. This type of indirect effect is more than the effect of the transparency in distribution. We should trace not only the channel through which rice flows but also the indirect effect of food aid, that is, the change to the perception of North Korean people. Aids are making a sacrifice of itself for reforming and opening of North Korean society (Interview, December 27, 2005).

Though food aid to North Korea, by overlooking the issue of monitoring, was said to have given rise to a criticism that rice was diverted for military use or was used as a means to an end for the people belonging to a special class in accumulating their wealth; however, we can also attach value to the positive aspects of it, which are that it has improved North Korean people's entitlement to food and, by implanting the idea on market economy in the minds of North Korean people, it has contributed to laying a foundation for North Korea to attempt to make changes to their social system.

**International Motive: power shift from international aid to bilateral aid**

As one of the ways of giving aid to North Korea the South Korean government gave food aid to North Korea, and in terms of cooperating with international society it provided food aid to North Korea through WFP. The total aid provided to North Korea by the international society, in its initial stage, had been much bigger in its scale than that provided by the South Korean government; however, from the year 2000 when the South-North relationship softened, the aid provided to the North by the South Korean government started to catch up, in scale, the aid provided by the international society. Resultantly, North Korea tends to solve their food problems

through the South Korean government rather than through international organizations which attach stricter conditions to their aid. Also, in consideration of the fact that the South Korean government needed to cooperate with the international society and that North Korea's dependence on South Korea has been on the increase, the South Korean government, because political interests among different parties in Korea collided with each other, has expanded its aid to the North via the bilateral aid method, as the result of which the aid to North Korea provided by international organizations has been minimal compared with that provided directly by South Korean government.

**Table 4.4 Total aid to DPRK by South Korea and international community**

US dollar: million

	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
South Korea (A)	23,225	460	4,723	3,185	4,688	11,376	13,539	13,492
International Society (B)	5,565	9,765	26,350	30,199	35,988	18,177	35,725	25,768
Sum (A+B)	28,790	10,225	31,073	33,384	40,676	29,553	49,264	39,260
A / B (%)	80.7	4.5	15.2	9.5	11.5	38.5	27.5	34

Source: Unification White Paper, 2005: 160

Due to the changes happening in North Korean society, the international society, while welcoming the aggressive aid to the North provided by South Korean government, has raised the issue that the way in which such aid to North Korea was provided by the South Korean government has been weakening the norm on securing transparency in the distribution of the food provided to North Korea. Regarding this matter Mr. Kim Sun (2005), heading the North Korean team at Good Neighbors, has pointed out 'non-existence of the principles governing aid to North Korea' as the biggest problem related to it. He opined:

South Korean government's food aid to North Korea and the monitoring system for it are very disappointing. It does not make sense at all that the South Korean government conducted monitoring on the distribution of rice in the North a few times in spite of the fact that it had provided a huge amount of rice. It is necessary to reexamine the overall aspects related to the aid. The biggest problem is that the South Korean government does not have principles to apply to the aid it provides to North Korea. The aid to North Korea which has been indiscriminately carried out in broad perspective under 'Sunshine

Policy' with out systematic and theoretic research into it should be reexamined in its entirety. It would rather be recommendable to examine the possibility to provide aid to North Korea through civilian channels. As civilian organizations are generally believed to have a much more systematic capability in doing this type of things, it is considered necessary to take advantage of them (Interview, Dec. 5, 2005)

Conclusively, the international society and some of the aid organizations in South Korea have a negative view on whether South Korea's policy giving aid to North Korea, which was motivated by domestic politics unlike the aid provided by international community in accordance with the general norms adopted by it, would serve to change the life of North Korean people because the effectiveness of food aid by the South is limited only to the political relationship between the two. For this reason the South Korean government is faced with criticism from both in and out of Korea that South Korea should increase the scale of aid to North Korea and prepare a tool by which to change the life of North Korean people who have been suffering from food shortage.

## Chapter 5: Conclusion

In order to understand the motives behind the food aid policies of two successive South Korean governments in the period 1993-2002 and its effect on the famine in the North Korea, I studied the inner and outer factors affecting famine in North Korea.

It can be said that the main cause of food insecurity in North Korea was the failure of food governance. North Korea failed to provide their people with proper food as a result of biased national security, ideological isolationism, and misuse of economic resources. In other words, the priority of political discussion in the DPRK is too heavily concentrated on military industry so that they failed to achieve economic development. *Ju-che* ideology led North Korea to the hermetic country contrary to international community demanding responsibility, accountability, transparency and this caused the failure in coping with food shortage. Lastly continued natural disasters and economic sanctions worsened the food crisis in North Korea.

The food crisis in North Korea has resulted from failure in its domestic politics and international politics related to North Korea and continued natural disasters. In particular, the domestic politics of South Korea exerted influence upon the food aid policies of international society and South Korea. In other words, Kim, Youngsam came to a decision to give food aid to North Korea in order to recover the initiative unearthed by the South Korean government in the course of making its efforts to solve the North Korean nuclear development issue. Also he tried to politically take advantage of the aid to the North, i.e. calculation of its effect upon elections.

However, frequent armed provocations of North Korea and internal and external criticism on the nonexistence of the principles applicable to aid to the North and on the process of the aid made the South Korea execute aid to the North Korea on a temporary basis. As a result, the contribution and role of South Korea in giving aid to

the North Korea retrogressed during the period between 1995 and 1998 when the food shortage of North Korea was extremely crucial.

The method of giving aid to North Korea in the form of loans which was adopted by the Kim, Daejung regime was a politically motivated one that was devised to reduce the burden of monitoring on both sides and, taking advantage of the aid to the North, to sustain the South-North relationship that was at that time turning for the better. Because this government, like the Kim, Youngsam government, stressed that aid is provided out of humanitarianism based on the spirit of a unitary nation, it could only be executed in a one-sided way in spite of the principle of reciprocity offered by South Korean government as the basis for South Korea's policy toward the North Korea. Also, the South Korean government which had joined the rank of international society due to the situation that made it call for monetary aid from IMF had to be under the influence of IMF in its relationship with the North Korea, but adopting the method to provide aid to the North Korea through international organizations, it made efforts to provide aid to the North Korea both independently and in cooperation with international society. However, considering the fact that the scale of the aid provided via the multilateral method involving international community was minimal in comparison with scale of the aid made directly between the South and North. It can be said to be kind of aid given at the rhetorical level for the purpose of rationalizing the aid given directly by South Korea.

South Korea's food aid, based on various motives has brought about various results in terms of political, humanitarian and economic aspects. Kim, Daejung government's food aid policy toward North Korea put an end to the hostile, confrontational relationship that had been formed between South and North Korea since the Korean War. He also created an atmosphere in which it could implement the policy in an aggressive manner on the basis of the relationship seeking a peaceful coexistence

through reconciliation and increased exchanges. Though there was criticism on the conversion of rice to other uses, the large amount of food provided in aid of North Korea in a humanitarian point of view made a contribution to alleviating the famine in North Korea, and it also contributed to enhancement of humanitarianism in exchanges between the South and North by making the reunion of separated families held on a regular basis. By making possible economic cooperation between the South and North, it also made a contribution to activation of economic exchanges between the two, and it could be said to have brought a positive outcome by implanting the idea on market economy in the minds of North Korean people.

However, the South Korean government, basing its food aid to the North on such motives, tried to conduct monitoring, relied mainly on the method of providing rice and brought about a situation in which it was not proper to improve the nutritional state of the people belonging to the class suffering from food shortage, and weakened the applicability of the international norm, ‘no access, no food.’

In conclusion, food aid to North Korea that comes from the special relationship between South and North Korea has made it possible for the South Korean government to provide to North Korea a food aid of an exceptional nature which is different from the food aid that has been adopted by international society, and was able to obtain the expected results like normalization of the South-North relationship, but regarding whether it has contributed, through ensuring transparency in distribution, to alleviation of the difficulty of the people that belong to the class suffering from food shortage, it can be said to have brought about a doubtful result. Therefore, South Korea’s food aid policy toward North Korea should be readjusted in such a way that it could meet the political, economic and social motives that have their roots in the special relationship of the two, secure transparency in distribution, and strengthen North Korean people’s entitlement to food.

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