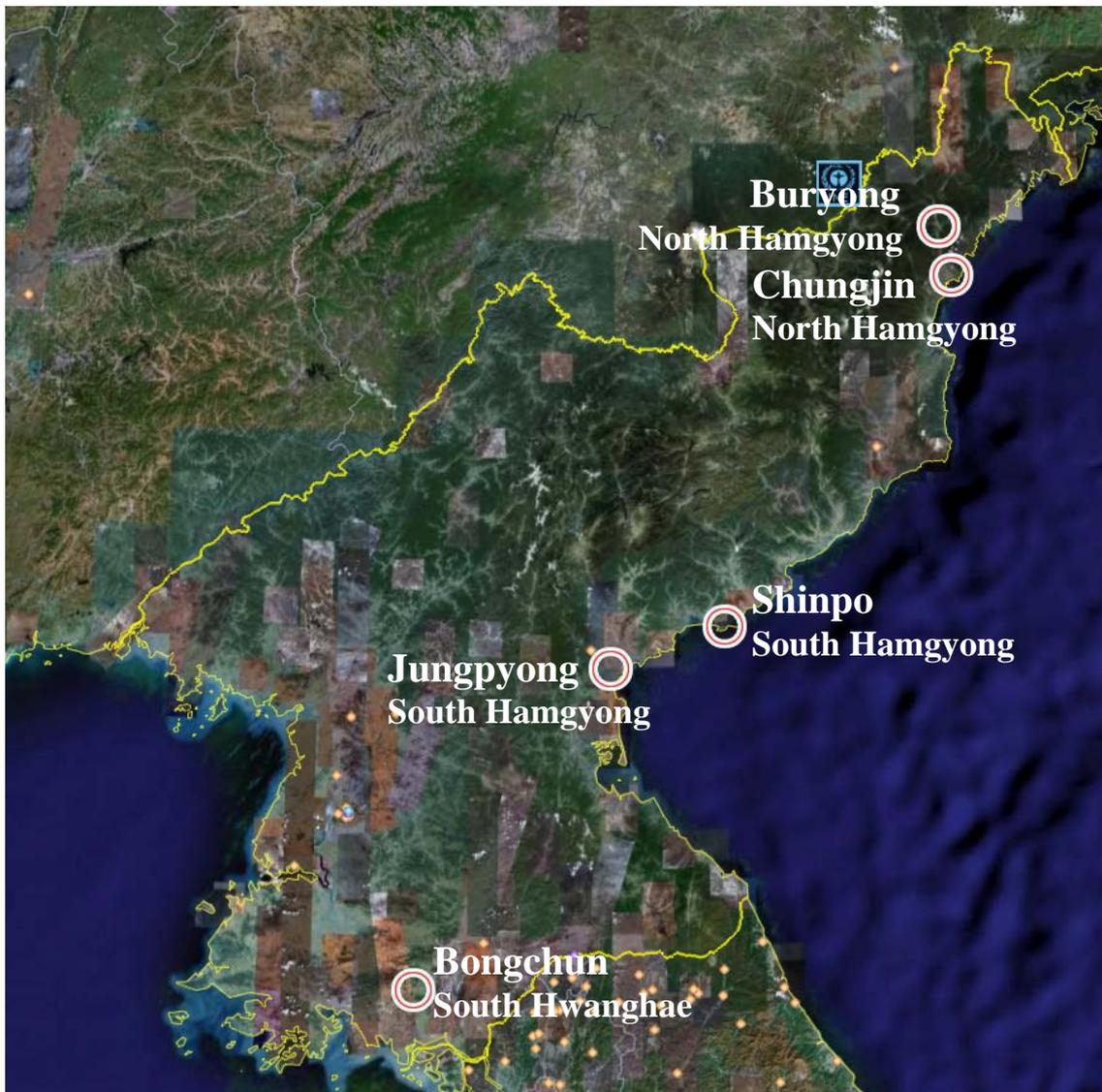


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<Image by Google earth>

Instructions on Taking the Accurate Census of the Population on October 1

On October 1, every city and county in the nation received from the Central Party instructions on taking accurate census of the population. Thus began the national census project in full swing. Statistical data are collected in detail by gender, age, educational level, labor party membership, membership of Socialist Working Youth League, place of employment and rank. It is reported that this census project started at the request of United Nations.

North Hamgyong Province Starts Food Rationing From October

Since beginning of October, North Hamgyong Province started rationing food supply in various regions of the province. North Hamgyong Province received whole corn (통옥수수) and wheat through the port of Chungjin and distributed them to the laborers and soldiers mobilized to the road construction for Baekdu Mountain tourism and also to orphanages in the cities and counties.

North Hamgyong Province Calls a Plenary Meeting to Discuss “How to Do Fall Harvest Well”

Provincial Party of North Hamgyong Province instructed all the city and county parties in the province to call plenary meetings by October 6. They were to discuss the general mobilization for the fall harvest that started October 1 and the various methods handed down from the higher party line. In response, all the city and county parties called plenary meetings and had discussions of the major topic from the top: “It is important to manage farming well at this time of food crisis, but it is more important to manage the fall harvest well.”

City party of Chungjin declared at the plenary meeting, “Factories, public enterprises, Dong offices, Women’s Unions, educational institutions should all participate fully in the fall harvest activities and prepare compost for the next year’s farming. Fertilizer supply is expected to be less than favorable next year and consequently, every workers and women’s unionist should prepare 30 kg of compost during this mobilization period. Physicians in the health care sector are to participate in the harvest on Sundays only and opening of market is to be delayed from two to four P.M. so that everyone can participate in the morning in the general mobilization.”

Fall Is the Season to Steal Grain

Throughout the nation, as the fall harvest is in full swing, so is the thievery of grain. The workers at the farms of Moosoo-ri, Buryong County of North Hamgyong Province try their best to steal ears of corn and bring them home. Farm managers keep warning them, “Keep your hands off. Severe penalties otherwise, without any results.

Han Mi-sook (41) says, “We eat only potatoes three times a day. I have been told that if I cause any harm toward the harvest, I would be sent to a labor training camp (노동단련대). However, it would be better to be sent to a training camp than to become physically feeble because of starvation. I really do not have anything to be scared of.” She refuses to stop stealing ears of corn. Ms. Han says that when she steals ears of corn,

she could be discovered rather easily. Therefore, she removes corn from the cob and hides them in the belt she wears around her chest. Some of her friends got caught doing it and received six months sentence in labor training camp.

Farms of Jungpyong County, South Hamgyong Province are suffering from losses due to the thievery of rice plants. After dark, soldiers and workers cut the ripe rice plants down and take them home. Damages to the crop extend to several hundreds of *pyeongs* of land overnight. Farm managers believe the situation got much worse this year in comparison to last year. However, severe punishment was not effective at all because there's nothing for people to eat.

Park Suk-ho (48), a team leader at a farm in Bongchun County, South Hwanghae Province took out 2 MT of corn with the help of farm workers of three teams. He claims that he intended to release the corn later when the food situation gets much worse. However, his storage site was discovered by security agents and he was arrested on a charge of "causing damage to the harvest and thievery."

Different Penalties Depending on who got killed for Stealing Corn

Farms of Shipo City, South Hamgyong Province have their team leaders mobilize all the team workers in guarding their cornfields. Even though the guards pay attention, the corn disappears from the field so rapidly that the guards usually stay edgy and feel stressful.

On October 2, a laborer of Yanghwa Fisheries Enterprise was caught stealing corn and was beaten by the guards and died as a result. Yanghwa Fisheries Enterprise strongly protested, claiming that, "Even if one gets caught stealing, one does not deserve to get beaten to death for stealing some corn. We realize that even a grain should be treated dearly. But beating someone to death is going too far." Authorities arrested three farm guards as culprits. Farm Management Council declared that they feel responsible and offered some corn and rice and some cash to the victim's family as a token of goodwill.

About a week later, a similar incident occurred at the same farm. Some homeless (Kkotjebis) got beaten to death but the handling of the incident turned out to be quite different. The guards bribed the policemen and the whole incident was buried in secret by the farm managers because of the fear of public's outcry about 'another beating to death.'"

Loose Clothes Is the Best for Stealing Grain

Residents mobilized for fall harvest try their best to take as much grain as possible on their way home after work. For example, they make the inside pocket of the clothes as big as possible or they wear several layers of loose clothes. As if it is a new fashion, every wears big and loose clothes this time of the year.

Everyone Invites Elderly Parents Home as Guardians Of Grain

Even those who usually pay no attention to their elderly parents try to invite them home during fall harvest time. This invitation is for the purpose of safeguarding the grain. Most of the measures taken against thievery of grain, including expensive locks, iron bars and

deep pits, etc fail. They realized that human beings staying home are the best bets against thievery. This is the reason why many want to invite their elderly parent home.



Good Friends: Center for Peace, Human Rights and Refugees



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