

Ilmin International Relations Institute

# Working Paper Series

Sponsored by

MacArthur Foundation's Asia Security Initiative

No. 09

## ***North Korea's Third-Generation Hereditary Succession and its Future***

Youngkey Cho  
Korea University

# North Korea's Third-Generation Hereditary Succession and its Future

Youngkey Cho

(Department of North Korean Studies,  
Korea University)

December 2010

## I. Building the System for a Third-Generation Hereditary Succession

### 1. Background

At the 3<sup>rd</sup> Party Delegates' Conference on September 28 which was held 44 years since its last session, Kim Jong-il's third son, Kim Jong-un, was appointed as the country's next leader. On September 27, the morning of the Party Delegates' Conference, North Korea officially announced that Kim Jong-un was given the title of a four-star general, thus beginning preparations for the public formation of the succession system. Kim Jong-un was also named the Vice Chairman of the Korean Workers Party (KWP)'s Central Military Commission during the Conference which was made official the next day. In addition he was appointed to the position of second-in-command in the North Korean People's Army, and was revealed to the international community as heir apparent.

Characteristically, the KWP will build a foundation of leadership by gaining control of the military. North Korea has its own inevitable reasons for which they pursue a hereditary succession of "Kim Il-sung to Kim Jong-il to Kim

Jong-un". This is carried out, despite condemnation from the international community, on claims that only blood relatives will be loyal to their predecessors and preventing any threats of betrayal. This logic has a degree of credibility when examining historical examples of successor, or key figure betrayal in communist power transfers. In 1956, the Soviet Union's Iosif Stalin's successor Nikita Khrushchov denounced Stalin, and in 1989, Romanian dictator Nicolae Ceausescu was shot by one of his associates. Kim Jong-il is well aware of such historical events. The possibility of betrayal is a significant threat to the Kim family, and the need to complete the succession of the so-called "Baekdu bloodline"<sup>1</sup> will ensure that any mistakes by the predecessor will be kept hidden behind the shield of family dignity.

Issues with Kim Jong-il's health made public in August 2008, is another factor that has bolstered the speed of succession. An unexpected downturn of Kim Jong-il's health before fully laying the succession's foundation will likely lead to a power struggle, as is the case most authoritarian governments and such conflict will be closely related to the existence of the state. Therefore, North Korea's efforts to rapidly complete the preparations for a third-generation hereditary succession functions as both a cautionary measure and a means to prevent betrayal by the proceeding leader.

North Korea is attempting to legitimize the third-generation succession from Kim Il-sung to Kim Jong-un by using the distorted image of the "Baekdu bloodline"; however, this structure has been criticized as tantamount to a 21<sup>st</sup> century feudal succession. Conscious of continuing criticism, North Korea has commenced efforts to portray Kim Jong-un as the new Kim Il-sung. His unveiling in the KWP meeting, which was touted as a "masterpiece", displayed

---

<sup>1</sup> North Koreans refer to successors as from the "Baekdu bloodline", who will continue the tradition of the spirits of Mt. Baekdu. Those who have blood relations with Kim Jong-il are called "the great men of Baekdu", and until now there were only three existing - Kim Il-sung, Kim Jung-sook, and Kim himself. In December 2009, Kim Jong-il's third son Jong-un has been given the title of "great man of Baekdu."

an individual made to look much like the young Kim Il-sung. Kim Jong-un's resemblance to Kim Il-sung was an intentional move as the leadership is aware that North Korean's loyalty towards Kim Il-sung is much stronger than that for Kim Jong-il. The assumption behind this is that the nostalgia of Kim Il-sung will induce the public's loyalty towards Kim Jong-un.

## 2. Building the Foundation for Succession

Kim Jong-un was born on January 8, 1983 as the third son to Kim Jong-il and his third wife, Ko Young-hee<sup>2</sup> (Kim Jong-un's birth year has been altered 1982 following the succession plan). Kim Jong-un did not attend elementary school, and is known to have been educated by a private instructor together with his uterine brother Kim Jong-chul.<sup>3</sup> From 1996 to 2000 he attended the International School of Berne in Switzerland with Kim Jong-chul.<sup>4</sup> From 2002 to April 2007, Kim Jong-un studied military science at Kim Il-sung Military University.<sup>5</sup> He is known to suffer from several health problems such as high blood pressure, diabetes, and an injury from an automobile accident in 2008, but none appear to be severe enough to compromise his succession. As Kim Jong-un resembles his father Kim Jong-il in appearance, his personality is also known to be similar, which has created difficulties for Kim Jong-il on deciding a successor.<sup>6</sup>

---

<sup>2</sup> There was an article of Kim Jong-nam claiming Kim Jong-un to have been born in 1984. (JoongAng Ilbo, June 7, 2010)

<sup>3</sup> Kenji Fujimoto, 『The General who Loved Nuclear and Women』, National Intelligence Service, 2006.

<sup>4</sup> There was a Japanese report that said Kim Jong-un had been in Verne from the summer of 1996 to January 2001, from which he had transferred to 7<sup>th</sup> grade in August 1998 and left school in his 9<sup>th</sup> grade year at the end of 2000. (The Mainichi Newspapers, June 14, 2009)

<sup>5</sup> Song Bong Sun, "Kim Jong-il and Succession," Korea Education Culture Center, 2008, p. 132.

<sup>6</sup> Kim Jung Bong, "North Korea's Third-Generation Hereditary Succession Process and

The process of Kim Jong-un's settlement into the position of heir apparent can be divided into three stages; education, nomination, and foundation building. In the education stage, he studied at Kim Il-sung Military University as an infantry commander for 3 years and researcher for 2 years to acquire the qualities of a successor of the *Songun* (military first) ideology. Although Kim Jong-un studied military science and *Juche* (the State ideology of North Korea, literally "self-reliance") leadership at the Kim Il-sung Military University from 2002 to April 2007, he is known to have conducted his studies at home through private lessons from professors who were enrolled members of the Workers' Party until graduating. It is assumed that Kim Jong-un has not finished the average 5-year-curriculum, and only received tutoring from professors for the short term ranging from several months to one year.<sup>7</sup> Moreover, while Ko Young-hee was alive, it is said that Kim Jong-un was invited to parties where only the most powerful elite of North Korea were invited. He also is said to have accompanied Chairman Kim Jong-il's visits to military camps.

It has been revealed that Kim Jong-un was nominated heir apparent upon his graduation from Kim Il-sung Military University in December 2006. South Korean intelligence agencies have also begun to assume since early 2006 that "Reliable sources in North Korea suggest that Kim Jong-un is likely to be nominated the successor with his qualities and leadership, as well as the fact that he is the most favored son."<sup>8</sup> <Respected General Kim Jong-un's Greatness> which was written around May and June of 2009, also mentions that "On the memorable December 24, 2006, respected General Kim Jong-un, upon receiving his diploma and medal from the Kim Il-sung Military University,

---

its Prospects," *Free Democratic Research*, Vol. 5 No. 1, pp, 18-19.

<sup>7</sup> Chung Sung-chang, "North Korea's Succession and the Prospects of Change in the Inter-Korean Relations," Sejong National Strategic Forum, 2009.

<sup>8</sup> Chung Sung-chang, 'North Korea's Supreme People's Assembly and the Official Proclamation of Kim Jong-un's Succession,' 『The Monthly Chosun』, November 2010.

will continue to lead the achievements of the *Juche* ideology's *Songun* revolution".<sup>9</sup>

It is assumed that the starting point of the succession's foundation building falls around January 2009, and on January 8, celebrating his birthday, Kim Jong-un's nomination was conveyed by Kim Jong-il to the North Korean armed forces. The Workers' Party's First Assistant Chief Lee Je-gang called for an emergency meeting between executives members with positions higher than section chief, and issued instructions on Chairman Kim Jong-il's succession decision to be delivered to each faction. This was followed by conveying the instructions to the Senior Colonel level through the political bureau. In February 2009, the song *Balgeoleum* (footsteps) started to spread in the North Korean society praising Kim Jong-un,<sup>10</sup> and the publication "Respected General Kim Jong-un's Greatness" was distributed to the executive members of the KWP in December 2009. The excerpts from "Respected General Kim Jong-un's Greatness" are shown below in <Table 1>.

<Table 1> Excerpts from "Respected General Kim Jong-un's Greatness"

- Young comrade General Kim Jong-un is another Great Baekdu man from Chosun.
- To be able to serve Kim Jong-un as the only successor to the *Juche* revolution is the greatest of luck, and we have Leadership luck, General luck, and Commander luck for generations to come.
- Chairman Kim Jong-il has stated "Our Captain Kim is helping me in many of my projects."

### 3. The Accumulation of Kim Jong-un's Achievements

<sup>9</sup> It is noteworthy that in the publication "Respected General Kim Jong-un's Greatness," Kim Jong-un's graduation is linked to the will to continue leading the achievements of the *Juche* idea's *Songun* revolution.

<sup>10</sup> The fact that the song *Balgeoleum* (footsteps) was publicly spread throughout North Korea is an example of the rising political status of Kim Jong-un.

Kim Jong-un must demonstrate his wisdom, decisiveness, intelligence and also show his achievements before he is designated the successor. Wisdom shows his background knowledge of the *Juche* and *Songun* ideology, and his aptitude for learning. Decisiveness means his accuracy in judgment and promptness in taking action, and intelligence is the ability to inherit the ideas and achievements of his predecessors and continue their development. Problems may arise because a successor's achievements cannot be made through artificial means, therefore it is important to focus on accumulating those of Kim Jong-un's.

Kim Jong-un has been striving to build his "revolutionary achievements" to obtain the legitimacy of his position as heir apparent since his nomination in January 2009. In April 5, 2009, the launching of the long-range missile "Kwangmyungsung 2" was said to have been led by Kim Jong-un to pave the way for revolutionary history. Kim Jong-un has also organized fireworks to celebrate Kim Jong-il's birthday, and Kim Jong-il was said to have been extremely satisfied and praised Kim Jong-un's efforts.<sup>11</sup>

As part of increased-production campaign, Kim Jong-un is said to have led the 150-day battle in April and the 100-day battle in September. He also organized and hosted the event "international labor day" on May 1<sup>st</sup>, where he invited 15,000 workers from all over North Korea to view a performance by the Merited State Chorus of the Korean People's Army, and fireworks alongside Kim Jong-il. Kim Jong-un is also in charge of the "Pyongyang 100 thousand house-building project", aimed to be completed in 2012.<sup>12</sup>

## II. Legitimizing a Third-Generation Hereditary Succession

---

<sup>11</sup> On April 2009, the fireworks festival was hosted by the Daedong River in Pyongyang under the theme of "flames of the strong and prosperous nation."

<sup>12</sup> Director of Administration of the KWP, Jang Song-thaek, is in charge of building 100,000 houses in Pyongyang. Jang is Kim Jong-un's uncle.

## 1. Reorganizing the KWP for a Third-Generation Hereditary Succession

North Korea's unique socialist state characteristics can be defined as "feudal socialism," which may explain the natural manner in which Kim Jong-il selected a successor from the "Baekdu bloodline." Upon achieving independence, North Korea's political system had been Kim Il-sung centered absolutism, but decisions on important state matters must go through the Party Delegates' Conference. (Refer to <Table 2>)

<Table 2> List of KWP Convention and Delegates' Conference

<i>1<sup>st</sup> KWP Convention</i> August 28-30, 1946	Adoption of the KWP doctrine and regulations
<i>2<sup>nd</sup> KWP Convention</i> March 27-30, 1948	Amendment of KWP regulations Election of KWP central organizations (Kim Il-sung elected the Vice Chairman of the Workers' Party Central Commission)
<i>3<sup>rd</sup> KWP Convention</i> April 23-29, 1956	Amendment of KWP regulations Election of KWP central organizations (Kim Il-sung elected the Chairman of the Workers' Party Central Commission)
<i>1<sup>st</sup> Delegates' Conference</i> March 3-6, 1958	Sect struggle (purging of Kim Du-bong) 5-year People's Economy Plan
<i>4<sup>th</sup> KWP Convention</i> September 11-18, 1961	7-year People's Economy Plan Election of KWP central organizations
<i>2<sup>nd</sup> Delegates' Conference</i> October 5-12, 1966	Creation of General Secretary and the Secretariat system
<i>5<sup>th</sup> KWP Convention</i> November 2-13, 1970	Amending of KWP regulations (public theorization of the <i>Juche</i> ideology) 6-year People's Economy Plan
<i>6<sup>th</sup> KWP Convention</i> October 10-14, 1980	Election of KWP central organizations (Kim Jong-il elected as member of the Public Bureau of the Central Committee, and officially obtains the status of successor)
<i>3<sup>rd</sup> Delegates' Conference</i> September 28, 2010	Election of KWP central organizations (Kim Jong-un's succession made official)



The Party Delegates' Conference has the characteristics of a provisional convention whenever the need arises in between regular meetings. Therefore, while functions of the Party Delegates' Conference according to KWP regulations is not very different from the KWP Conventions, there is a distinction in its function as being a provisional meeting to resolve urgent matters. The Party Delegates' Conference's main role is ① to resolve urgent problems related to the Party's line, policy, strategy, and tactics, and ② to elect members of the Party's Central Committee, candidates, and quasi-candidate members.

Since 1960, North Korea has held its KWP Convention every decade to proclaim its long-term plans, but there has not been any meeting since its 6<sup>th</sup> session in 1980. This is due to the deterioration of North Korea's domestic and international situation from economic difficulties and the nuclear problem, disabling them from establishing any long-term plans.

However, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Party Delegates' Conference was inevitable as the Party needed restructuring since more than half of the Central Committee's members since Kim Il-sung's death have either died or been dismissed. Aside from the obvious reasons, it was Kim Jong-il's personal decision to leave his successor a functioning Party and state. Thus, the meeting took place to fulfill both the restoration of the Party and the state, and to normalize its functions. This means that if the state was governed by a state system centered around the Defense Committee, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Party Delegates' Conference was intended to normalize the Party and the state system.<sup>13</sup>

The recent Party Delegates' Conference also amended the Party's regulations to act as strengthening Kim Jong-il's status by proclaiming that the *Songun* ideology is the basis of socialist politics, and that its value leads the social revolution and construction. This proclamation has established the

---

<sup>13</sup> Lee Ki Dong, "Intentions of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Supreme People's Assembly and the Future Political Schedule", 『NK Vision』 No. 17 (July 2010), p.11,

Party's line of following the *Songun* ideology.<sup>14</sup>

It should be noted that through the 3<sup>rd</sup> Party Delegates' Conference's results, Kim Jong-il succeeded in centering the Party system around himself and unified the governing principles. This procedure has secured some legitimacy for Kim Jong-un's succession, and established the foundation for Kim Jong-un to command the Party and the North Korean Armed Forces as the successor of the *Songun* ideology.<sup>15</sup>

## 2. Utilizing the Workers' Party Organization for Succession

North Korea has also furnished important decisions for the succession process through the recent 3<sup>rd</sup> Party Delegates' Conference. Kim Jong-il had once again been named General Secretary of the Party, renominated from 1994, and members of the Party's Central Committee were reduced from 124 to 145, while candidate members were increased from 103 to 105. Kim Jong-un, Kim Kyong-hui (Kim Jong-il's sister), and six other members were given the status of four-star general.<sup>16</sup> The fact that civilians were given military titles is unique to North Korea and does not hold any special meaning by itself, but the fact that Kim Jong-un has been given a military title seems to be the ground work for entering into the Party's Central Military Commission or the National Defense Commission.

---

<sup>14</sup> The amended regulations of the Workers' Party states that the KWP is the advance guard, the core, of the people with forever respect to Kim Il-sung, the Great Leader, and with the Great Leader Kim Jong-il strengthening the workers class through organization and ideology. (Refer to Ministry of Unification, 『Report on the Delegates' Conference of the Workers' Party』 (October 8, 2010))

<sup>15</sup> Kim Sang Hoon, "Analysis on the Conference of the KWP and the Change in Power Structure," 『KDI North Korean Economic Review』, p. 48, October 2010.

<sup>16</sup> The North Korean Army ranking is in the order of Marshal -> Vice Marshal -> General -> Colonel General -> Lieutenant General -> Major General.

The major departments within the Korean Workers' Party are the Political Bureau, State Inspection Commission, and the Central Military Commission. The core of the amendments is shown in <Table 3>.

<Table 3> Amendments from the 3<sup>rd</sup> Party Delegates' Conference

Political Bureau	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Standing Members (5): Kim Jong-il, Kim Yong-nam, Choe Yong-rim, Jo Myung-rok, Ri Young-ho</li> <li>-Members (12): Kim Young-choon, Jun Byong-ho, Kim Gook-tae, Kim Gi-nam, Choe Tae-bok, Yang Hyong-sub, Kim Kyong-hui, Gang Sok-ju, Byon Young-rim, Ri Yong-mu, Joo Sang-song, Hong Sok-hyong</li> <li>-Candidates (15): Kim Yang-gun, Kim Young-il, Jang Song-thaek etc.</li> </ul>
Secretariat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-General Secretary (1): Kim Jong-il</li> <li>-Secretary (10): Kim Gi-nam, Choe Tae-bok, Choe Ryong-hae, Moon Kyong-deok, Park Do-choon, Kim Young-il, Kim Yang-gun, Kim Pyong-hae, Tae Jong-su, Hong Sok-hyong</li> </ul>
National Defense Commission of North Korea	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Chairman (1): Kim Jong-il</li> <li>-Vice Chairman (2): Kim Jong-un, Ri Young-ho (Chief of General Staff)</li> <li>-Member (16): Kim Young-choon, Kim Jong-gak, Kim Myong-kook, Jang Song-thaek etc.</li> <li>* Expanded from the former 6 to 19 members</li> </ul>

### 3. Legitimizing the Third-Generation Hereditary Succession

The significance of the recent 3<sup>rd</sup> Party Delegates' Conference is closely related to the succession in that it has established the successor as the only leader, and that it has physically expanded the leadership. The 3<sup>rd</sup> Party Delegates' Conference has also normalized the Party's organization which was left with only the framework upon Kim Il-sung's death in 1994. The *Songun* policy which ensured Kim Jong-il's personal powers through operations by the Defense Committee since 1998 has neutralized the Party. Therefore, analysis shows that the recent meeting has changed the Party's line from *Songun* to "Party-first" by normalizing the Party's functions.

The most characteristic factor of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Party Delegates' Conference is that it has established the foundations for Kim Jong-un's succession. Therefore, while the meeting itself is a formality that has to be respected, the junior Kim has been given the titles of vice chairman of the Central Military Commission, member of the Central Commission, and four-star general. Since the Central Military Commission commands the People's Army and handles military policies, Kim Jong-un has achieved the position of second-in-line on being appointed the vice chairman of the Central Military Commission. However, lacking military experience, Ri Young-ho (Chief of General Staff) appears to have been appointed to assist Kim Jong-un.

North Korea is following the exact procedures for succession that unfolded 30 years ago when Kim Jong-il was announced as successor to Kim Il-sung. This seems to have played an important role while emphasizing the traditional validity of Kim Jong-un's succession. His side-by-side appearance with Kim Jong-il in the live broadcast of the 65<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the Workers' Party, and the signing of loyalty by the North Korean Communists Party in Japan indicate that Kim Jong-un's succession is official. Since then, propaganda activities and efforts to display Kim Jong-un's genius have

strengthened.<sup>17</sup>

North Korea has been propagating the *Songun* ideology since October 2009 to show Kim Jong-un's excellent understanding of it. Just as Kim Jong-il took over North Korean ideology in 1982 with his writings on the *Juche* ideology prior to Kim Il-sung's 70<sup>th</sup> birthday, Kim Jong-un seems to be taking similar course of action.<sup>18</sup>

### III. Prospects of the Third-Generation Hereditary Succession

#### 1. Solidifying the Third-Generation Hereditary Succession

Generally speaking, whether succession was successful or not is determined through its institutionalization and legitimacy.<sup>19</sup> Institutionalization of the succession means positioning loyal executives at the core of the North Korean power structure to lead the new generation with the successor; the legitimacy of succession means that the successor is welcomed by the North Korean people through his political achievements as well as with his knowledge

---

<sup>17</sup> North Korean press has been broadcasting Kim Jong-un's outstanding qualities. Kim has been able to write Chinese characters in printed form since his youth, is familiar with politics, economy, culture, history and military, and can speak 4 languages - English, German, French, and Italian - from his 2 years of studying abroad. They also claim that the reason North Korea should have nuclear capacity is because Kim has seen the wars that the US and the imperialists have waged, which is why he has decided that North Korea should also have nuclear power.

<sup>18</sup> It is said that if the Workers' Party was emphasizing *Songun* ideas until September 2009, since then it has been teaching the *Songun* ideology. (Open News, May 10, 2010).

<sup>19</sup> Kim Kap Sik, "Results from North Korea's Party Delegates' Conference and its Prospects," 「Issue Brief」, p. 4, National Assembly Research Service, October 4, 2010.

in politics and ideology.

Institutionalization of the succession was achieved by Kim Jong-il's actions at the 3<sup>rd</sup> Party Delegates' Conference, but the strengthening of its foundation depends on the ability of the successor, Kim Jong-un. Accordingly, North Korea is now focusing on emphasizing Kim Jong-un's qualities to manipulate the legitimacy of the succession, as is observed in its extensive PR activities which boast Kim Jong-un's abilities, greatness, and his achievements.

Kim Jong-un's status in the future is closely related to his personal capabilities and Kim Jong-il's life expectancy. Currently, North Korean's concerns are focused not on the third-generation hereditary succession, but their day-to-day survival. Therefore, if Kim Jong-un succeeds in resolving the food shortage issue, he will be able to gain the loyalty and obedience of the North Korean people. It seems that the reason economic problems were mentioned at the 3<sup>rd</sup> Party Delegates' Conference is because Kim Jong-un will soon develop suggestions to the problem.<sup>20</sup> Analysis shows that North Korea's recent appeasement policy against South Korea since the 3<sup>rd</sup> Conference is not irrelevant to resolving food shortages in North Korea. Kim Jong-il's life expectancy is also closely related to building the foundation for Kim Jong-un's succession. Therefore, resolving the food shortage problem and the issue of Kim Jong-il's life expectancy will affect Kim Jong-un's current authority, as well as the grounds for his future leadership.

However, Kim Jong-un's succession is limited by his birth, meaning that he has to give up on the *Songun* ideology and focus on economic reform to build a "powerful and prosperous country" by 2012. If the younger Kim insists on maintaining the *Songun* ideology, he will not be able to revive the economy; therefore, he faces the dilemma of having to pursue economic reform while simultaneously adhering to the *Songun* ideology.

---

<sup>20</sup> It has been revealed that North Korea distributed a bottle of liquor and some meat to every household under Kim Jong-un's name to celebrate the 65<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the foundation of the KWP.

## 2. The Future Direction of North Korean Politics and its Economy

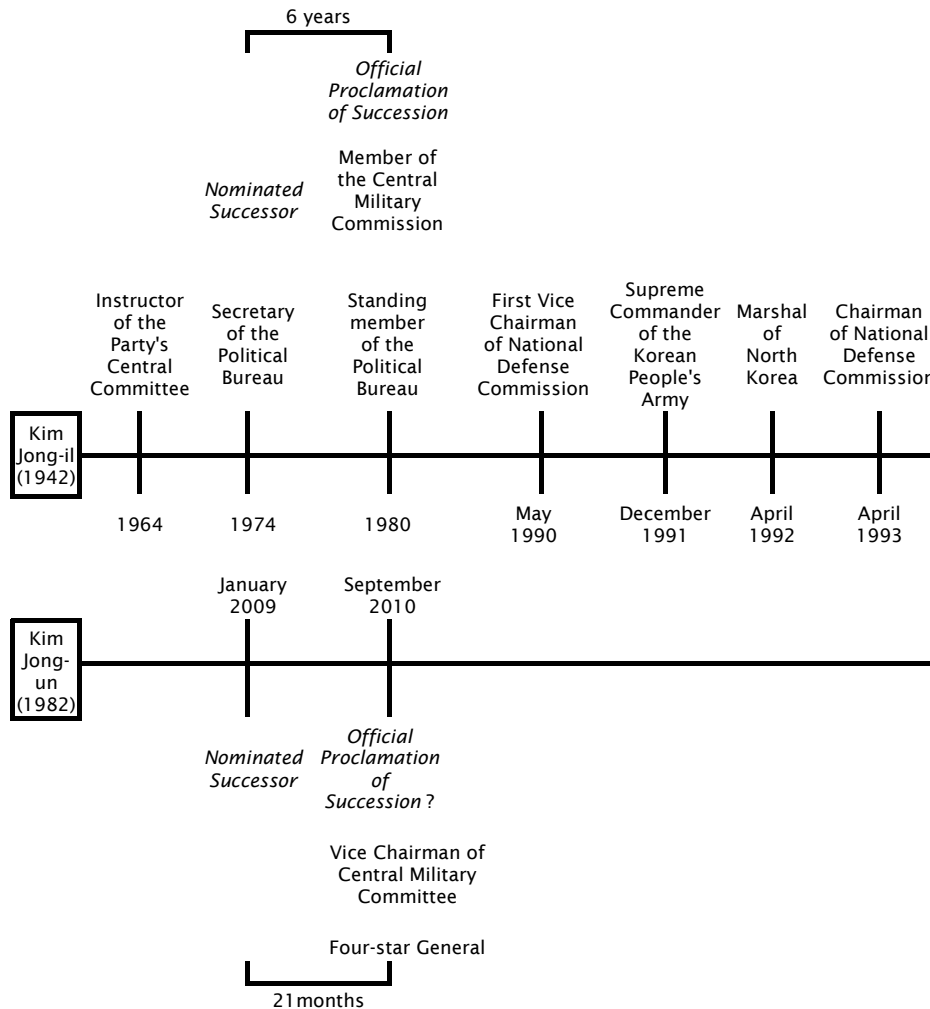
North Korea will focus on completing Kim Jong-un's succession as fast as possible. Extensive propaganda activities are expected in the short term to solidify Kim Jong-un's status. However, in the mid to long-term plan, North Korea will strive to normalize the KWP's functions to maintain and strengthen socialism, and any changes that occur will be limited within the boundaries of maintaining the socialist order. Much effort to acquire material support from South Korea and China is expected to build the foundation of a socialist state strategy. North Korea has not been able to establish economic plans since 1994 due to financial difficulties.

Compared to Kim Jong-il's succession from Kim Il-sung, Kim Jong-un's succession possesses many weaknesses. Upon being nominated the successor in 1974, Kim Jong-il had a 6 year verification period before he became a standing member of the Political Bureau and a member of the Central Military Commission, and was officially named heir apparent. However, since his nomination as successor in January 2009, Kim Jong-un has conducted private activities for 21 months and was appointed to the position of Vice Chairman of the Central Military Commission. Moreover, Kim Jong-il was 38 years old when he became successor, compared to Kim Jong-un being only 28 years of age.<sup>21</sup> The succession structure of Kim Jong-il and Kim Jong-un are illustrated below in <Picture 1>.

---

<sup>21</sup> It is irrational to assume that Kim Jong-un lacks experience because of his age. It is necessary to take into consideration Kim Jong-un's personal qualities, as well as the group of elites who support him, and the feudal characteristics of the North Korean political environment.

<Picture 1> Comparing Kim Jong-il and Kim Jong-un's Succession Structure



Picture by Kim Kap Sik (2010)

There is a high probability that extreme measures may be taken in the process of Kim Jong-un's succession. Such occurrences may appear if the succession is not proceeding smoothly, and in the form of either nuclear tests/provocations, or by a large-scale purge of opposition powers, which may all lead to contingency in North Korea. Contingency in North Korea is most likely to occur from the upper class as organized resistance from the bottom is closely monitored by North Korea's State Security Department and the People's Security Department.

Severe economic difficulties may also trigger extreme actions from the



North Korean leadership class. As profits from inter-Korean exchange and cooperation, and the international community's support have rapidly decreased, North Korea has been experiencing its worst difficulties since 2000. Funding for the succession campaign is also increasing pressures felt by the economy, the civilian sector's productivity level has somewhat declined with the possibility that limited resources may be converted to support the successor's rule.

#### **IV. Prospects on North Korea's Future Relationship with South Korea and China**

##### **1. Inter-Korean Relations**

The future of inter-Korean relations is closely linked to Kim Jong-un solidifying his position. Internally, Kim Jong-un will strengthen North Korea's offensive policy against South Korea, but in order to resolve the country's economic difficulties he will also look into an appeasement policy. Kim will continue to insist on hosting meetings for divided families and resuming Mt. Kumkang Tours to acquire foreign currency. He has even started to insist on resuming the Six-Party Talks.<sup>22</sup> One can assume that should "Kim Jong-un's plans" for North Korea bring relief to food shortage, inter-Korean relations will remain at the *status quo*.

##### **2. Sino-North Korean Relations**

---

<sup>22</sup> On October 15, 2010 North Korea's head of delegation to the Six-Party Talks, Kim Gae-kwan, First Vice Minister of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, showed a strong intent to reopen Six-Party Talks in Beijing when he stated that North Korea is "prepared to move forward on the 9 · 19 Joint Statement." (Yonhap News, October 22, 2010)

Through the 3<sup>rd</sup> Party Delegates' Conference, the close Sino-North Korean relationship will continue some time. The Chinese envoy's gift, among them a picture, delivered to North Korea is speculated to have significant meaning.

North Korea and China are likely to form a common front using the Six-Party Talks as means to overcome the *Cheonan* Incident, caused by an attack by the North Korean torpedo near the coastal waters of Baekryeong Island in May. North Korea will try to use the Six-Party Talks as means to improving its relations with South Korea and the US, and in acquiring economic aid.

The visit to China by Kim Jong-il from August 25th through the 30th has had the effect of closing what distance there was between China and North Korea. The two visits to China by Kim this year has offered positive opportunities in economic ties with China, and is expected to increase North Korea's dependency on China as they assist in building Kim Jong-un's status. However, there appears to be a disparity in the two nations' views. While North Korea expects large investments, China seems rather reluctant to participate in such investments. Furthermore, China is interested in acquiring North Korea's natural resources and Social Overhead Capital (SOC) in order to develop the Dongbei area, but the North Koreans are cautious in their dealings.

## References

Chung Sung-chang, 'North Korea's Party Delegates' Conference and the Official Proclamation of Kim Jong-eun's Succession,' 『The Monthly Chosun』 , November 2010.

Chung Sung-chang, "North Korea's Succession and the Prospects of Change in the Inter-Korean Relations," Sejong National Strategic Forum, 2009.

Kenji Fujimoto, 『The General who Loved Nuclear and Women』 , National Intelligence Service, 2006.

Kim Kap Sik, "Results from Conference of the Korean Workers' Party and its Prospects," 『Issue Brief』 , National Assembly Research Service, October 4, 2010.

Kim Sang Hoon, "Analysis on the Delegates' Conference and the Change in Power Structure," 『KDI North Korean Economic Review』 , p. 48, October 2010.

Kim Jung Bong, "North Korea's Third-Generation Hereditary Succession Process and its Prospects," *Free Democratic Research*, Vol. 5 No. 1, pp. 18-19.

Lee Ki Dong, "Intentions of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Delegates' Conference of KWP and the Future Political Schedule", 『NK Vision』 , p.11, Serial Number 17, July 2010.

Song Bong Sun, 『Kim Jong-il and Succession』 , Korea Education Culture Center, 2008.

Young-Sun Ha et al., 『Legitimization of the Kim Jong-il Succession and the Future on the Korean Peninsula』 , East Asia Institute, 2010.

ChoongAng Ilbo, June 7, 2010.

Open News, May 10, 2010.

The Mainichi Newspapers, June 14, 2009.

Yonhap News, 『Kim Jong-eun Ranked no. 6』 , October 11, 2010.

Yonhap News, October 22, 2010.

Yonhap News, June 3, 2010.