

Studies Series 04-1

The Successor Theory of North Korea

Kyo Duk Lee



Korea Institute for
National Unification

The Successor Theory of North Korea

The Successor Theory of North Korea

Kyo Duk Lee



**Korea Institute for
National Unification**

The Successor Theory of North Korea

By Kyo Duk Lee

Korea Institute for National Unification

The Impact of Personality Cult in North Korea

Printed: July, 2004

Published: July, 2004

Place of Publication: Korea Institute for National Unification

Publisher: President of Korea Institute for National Unification

Registration No.: 2-2361 (April 23, 1997)

Address: 535-353 Suyu-dong, Gangbuk-gu, Seoul, 142-887, Korea

Telephone: 82-2-900-4300; 82-2-901-2525

Fax: 82-2-901-2544

(c) Korea Institute for National Unification 2004

Publications of Korea Institute for National Unification are available at major bookstores.

Also, contact the Government Publication Sales Center: Tel: 734-6818 or 394-0337

ISBN No. 89-8479-225-X

The successor theory of North Korea / by Kyo Duk Lee.

Seoul: Korea Institute for National Unification, 2004

p. ; cm (Studies series ; 04 01)

ISBN 89 8479 225 X

340.911-KDC4

320.95193 JJC21

CIP2004001319

The analyses, comments and other opinions contained in this monograph are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views of Korea Institute for National Unification.

Contents

I . Introduction	1
II . The Origin of the Successor Theory	3
1. Theory of Suryong (the Great Leader) ——	4
2. Theory of Continuous Revolution ——	9
III . Directions of Political Change and their Impacts on	14
IV . The Position and Role of the Successor	22
V . The Requirements for the Successor	27
VI . The Unitary Leadership System of the Successor	35
VII . Conclusion	42
References	47

I . Introduction

Chairman Kim Jong Il, the absolute power holder in North Korea, has reached his 60s. Taking the precedent case in which Kim Il Sung considered a selection of his successor around his sixtieth birthday¹, this signifies that the time has come for Kim Jong Il to choose his successor or, at least, seriously consider the succession matter.

Because there is no evidence of Kim Jong Il mentioning the succession issue officially, limitation is apparent in discussing the subject of succession in North Korea. Deducing a frame of successor selection process is nonetheless possible, though limited, through an analysis of the theory of the great leader, on which *Juche* idea is founded, and the successor theory, which emerged during the power succession from Kim Il Sung to Kim Jong Il.

The successor theory is a logic that was brought forward to justify the system of father-to-son succession, a succession to Kim Il Sung by Kim Jong Il, in North Korea. Although North Korea itself does not specifically use the term 'successor theory,' there appear a fixed

1 Following his sixtieth birthday, on April 22, 1972, Kim Il Sung made a remark as such: "I am old now that I have reached my sixtieth birthday and you comrades are ageing as well. However, we have not accomplished our tasks.... We must further consolidate the center of our revolutionary ranks and bring up well our revolutionary guards and heirs in order to carry the revolution forward." Workers' Party of Korea, *Among the People*, vol. 23, (Pyongyang: Workers' Party of Korea Publishing House, 1980), pp.27-28

2 The Successor Theory of North Korea

system of logic or a coherent contention in the content of documents that refer to the succession issues.²

Kim Jong Il did not become Kim Il Sung's successor on the basis of the existing and conceptualized successor theory. A possibility of the emergence of a different theory, therefore, cannot be all ruled out if a specific person comes to succeed Kim Jong Il and if it needs to be rationalized. Theory may lead to practice, but more often, theory is generated to explain a certain existing phenomenon.

Nevertheless, the logic that supported the system of succession, which designated Kim Jong Il as the successor, cannot be disregarded even when a new logic emerges to legitimize Kim Jong Il's successor. Since the basic frame of the successor theory is deeply rooted in North Korea's absolute and sacred *Juche* idea and the theory of *Suryong*, some principles of the successor theory will continue as long as *Juche* remains to be the guiding ideology and will form the basis for a new successor theory that might come out when Kim Jong Il designates his successor.

This study focuses on identifying the significance of a successor and requirements for a successor in North Korea through an examination of the logical composition and specific contents of the successor theory.

2 This point is discussed in detail in Kim Jae Chon, *The Theory and Practice of the Succession Issue*, (publisher unknown, 1989) and Kim, Yumin, *The Successor Theory*, (Shinmunhwa publishing co., 1984). A translated version of the latter was published in Tokyo by Kuwolsubang.

II . The Origin of the Successor Theory

Understanding the successor theory is predicated on studying the theory of *Suryong* (the great leader) and the theory of continuous revolution. The theory of the great leader, in particular, is a matrix and origin of the successor theory. Premising on superhuman ability and quality of an individual, it marks a central thesis of the North Korean ruling ideology, *Juche*, and a specification of the subject to power succession.³

The successor theory is also an important component of the theory of continuous revolution which theorizes power succession as a succession of a revolutionary cause rather than a mere succession of the seat of power. The theory of continuous revolution is founded upon the theory of *Suryong* which equates a revolutionary cause of the working class with that of the leader and states that the revolutionary cause of the working class can only be completed under the leadership of the great leader.

Accordingly, a logical order of rationalizing the power succession can be summarized as follows: *Juche* ideology → theory of *Suryong* → theory of continuous revolution → the successor Theory.

3 Yang Bum Jik "Power succession issue and change in economic policy in North Korea." *Today and Tomorrow of the North Korean Economy*, (Seoul: Hyundai Research Institute, 1996), p.319

1. Theory of *Suryong* (the great leader)

Theory of *Suryong* is a revolutionary theorization of the issues related to the leader, which summarizes its logic as follows: “popular masses are placed in the center of everything, and the leader is in the center of the masses.”

The theory of *Suryong* is a central proposition of *Juche* Idea. North Korea asserts that *Juche* Idea is a man-centered, not material or psychological centered, philosophical idea based on the philosophical principle that “man is the master of everything and decides everything.”⁴ Unlike man in materialism that is defined by social materialistic foundations, man in the *Juche* idea is a motive force of everything.

According to the philosophical principle of the *Juche* Idea, man takes a special position and role as the master of everything because he is a social being with *Chajusong* (independence), creativity and consciousness. *Chajusong* is an attribute of social man who is desirous of living in an independent way by getting rid of all forms of bonds and fetters of nature and society. Creativity is a quality of man to shape his destiny by transforming nature and society purposefully and consciously. Consciousness is an attribute to adjust and control all his cognitive and practical activities. On the basis of such an outlook of

4 Lee Sung Joon, *Collection on the Great Juche Idea 1: the philosophical Principle of the Juche Idea*, (Pyongyang: Academy of Social Science Publishing House, 1985), pp.58-141.

man, the *Juche* idea considers nature and society as the subject of transformation by man, and argues that man elevates his position and role in the world through this transformation process.⁵

The man-centered philosophical principle sets the basic foundation of the 'social-historical principle' of the North Korean historical view. Like the materialistic conception of history, the North Korean historical view argues for the law-governed historical development, but points to "man" as the subject and the motive force in this historical development. This is where the socio-historical principles of "the popular masses are the masters of history" and "human history is a history of the people's struggle for *Chajusong*" are derived from.⁶ The people's struggle for *Chajusong*, however, cannot be realized naturally, but can be decisively fulfilled by the masses' consciousness of independence in promoting their *chajusong* and creativity. What is essential in this process is the 'leadership of the great leader'. The following excerpt explains why 'correct leadership by the leader' is needed in the process of historical development.

The popular masses are the subject of history, but it does not mean that they can take the position and role as the subject of history by themselves in any conditions... The popular masses are, in reality, composed

5 Lee Sung Joon, *Collection on the Great Juche Idea 1: the philosophical Principle of the Juche idea*, pp.171-246.

6 Park Il Bum, *Collections on the Great Juche Idea 2: the Socio-Historical Principles of the Juche Idea*, (Pyongyang: Academy of Social Science Publishing House, 1985), pp.28-344.

6 The Successor Theory of North Korea

of individual members and various classes and strata with different situations, interests, orientations and demands... Only with correct leadership, the popular masses can form a coherent group and a unified and organized rank that is able to carry out activities unitarily for a single orientation and demand, overcoming the differences in demands and interests of individual members and strata. After all, correct leadership endows an organized and undivided characteristic to the popular masses as a unitary group, and helps them to fulfill the position and role as the subjects of history.⁷

As mentioned above, North Korea argues that, in order for the masses to be the subjects of history, they should feature the conscious and organized masses that can carry out activities purposefully and consciously as a motive force. For this purpose, it is argued that 'the leader and the masses should unite.'

This proposition of 'unity and cohesion of the masses and the leader' is the source of deriving the theory of *Suryong* from *Juche*idea.

The theory of *Suryong* reasons that the role of the leader is decisive in the historical development and the revolutionary cause of the working class can only be accomplished under the leadership of the great leader. In this sense, the theory differs from historical materialism that stresses the role of the masses, and also sets a method of establishing a unitary leading system for Kim Il Sung.

North Korea defines *Suryong* as the "center of unifying the popular

7 Park Il Bum, *Collections on the Great Juche Idea 2: the Socio-Historical Principles of the Juche Idea*, p.200, p.202.

masses through comprehensively analyzing and understanding their independent demands and interests” and a being who plays a decisive role in carrying out the revolutionary cause through leading the working class and the party.

Therefore, ‘*Suryong*’ in North Korea does not point to central positions in power such as the head of the state or the party general secretary, but to an absolute leader who is assuming such a position.

A central theme of the theory is related to the ‘absolute position’ and ‘decisive role’ of the leader. According to the theory of *Suryong*, the leader is the top brain of the working people who are taking the uppermost leadership position among the popular masses. What it means by the leader being the top brain of the popular masses is that the leader is the only representative of the organizational opinion of the masses. In order for the masses to realize their *Jajusong* (independence), they need to transform their orientation and demand into an organized opinion; the only person who can carry out such a difficult and important task is the leader.

Therefore, it is the leader who carries out a decisive role in the historical development and in the revolutionary struggle of the working class. Like the position of the brain in human activities, the position of the leader is absolute. It is thus requested of the masses to have attitude and stance to uphold the leader wholeheartedly by firmly recognizing the position and role of the leader. It also asks for opinion and outlook of the masses to unconditionally support the leader and take him as an absolute leader. This is so-called the ‘revolutionary view

8 The Successor Theory of North Korea

of the leader.⁸

In the 'revolutionary view of the leader,' the leader is defined as the only master of the historical development and a flawless human being who is close to the omnipotent. Since the leader is the only driving force in the historical development, all the masses should follow the guidance of the leader unconditionally without raising any doubt.

As explained earlier, the popular masses are the master of history in the socio historical principles of *Juche* idea, but they can take a position and role of driving force only under the correct guidance. Such guidance comes from the leadership of the party and *Suryong*, whereby the party leadership essentially results to the leadership of *Suryong*. The 'leadership system' is an institutional arrangement that aims to guarantee the leadership of *Suryong*.

According to North Korea, the leadership system brings the leader and the masses together, features a comprehensive body of organizations and tools for realizing the leadership of the party and *Suryong*, and comprises of the party, state, and other organizations.⁹ The essential content in the leadership system is, of course, the

8 Regarding the revolutionary view of the leader, Kim Jong Il instructed that "one needs to sacrifice his/her everything for the leader and highly uphold and support the leader with innocent and uncontaminated spotless mind," Kim Jong Il, "Firmly Establishing the Revolutionary Outlook on the Leader among Officials," talk to the senior officials of the organizational leadership department and propaganda department of the Central Committee of the Workers' party of Korea on August 23, 1988, *Kim Jong Il Selected Works*, vol. 9, (Pyongyang: Workers' Party of Korea, 1997), p.277"

'unitary leading system of the great leader," which is supposedly guarantee the monolithic leadership of Suryong in revolution and construction.¹⁰

North Korea stresses that the establishment of the unitary ideological system of the Party is important in thoroughly realizing the monolithic leadership of *Suryong*, and defines the unitary ideological system of the Party as the "ideological system that firmly arms the revolutionary idea of the leader, enables coherence around the leader, and helps carrying out revolutionary struggles and construction tasks under the monolithic leadership of the leader".¹¹

2. Theory of Continuous Revolution

The reason why the theory of continuous revolution forms a basis of the successor theory is because North Korea recognizes the succession issue as a matter of carrying forward and completing the revolutionary cause of the leader. According to North Korea, the continuous revolution implies "unceasingly carrying out the revolutionary struggle, without any delay or discontinuation, until the

9 Academy of Social Science (ed.), *Dictionary of Philosophy*, (Pyongyang: Academy of Social Science Publishing House, 1985), p.184

10 For detailed explanation on the leadership system, see Kim Min and Han Bong Suh, *Collections on Great Juche Idea*, vol. 9: the leadership system, (Pyongyang: Academy of Social Science Publishing House, 1985) pp.77-226.

11 Academy of Science (ed.), *Dictionary of Philosophy*, p.153.

independence of the popular masses is fully realized.”

North Korea pinpoints that revolution should continue even after the establishment of the socialist system because socialism and communism can be built through a long-term struggle for economic construction and class struggles.

At the Meeting of Active Industrial Workers in March 1975, Kim Il Sung instructed that “even when the capitalist system and imperialism have been overthrown, socialism and communism will not be created spontaneously. Socialism and communism can only be built through a prolonged struggle for economic construction and class struggle.”¹² In other words, establishment of the socialist system may eliminate the social economic basis that oppresses independence of an individual, but old social legacy may remain in many aspects of a social life. In order to eradicate the legacies such as resurgence of class enemies, the old ideology disparities between the urban and rural areas, class distinctions between the working class and the peasantry, purposeful and conscious struggles are needed.

Apart from the domestic reason, continuous revolution is necessary for an international reason, namely the continued existence of capitalism and imperialism. When the socialist system is set up, there are no exploiting classes at home, but internationally, capitalism and

12 Kim Il Sung, “Let us promote the building of socialism by vigorously carrying out the three revolutions.” Speech at the Meeting of Active Industrial Workers, March 3, 1975, *Kim Il Sung Works*, vol. 30, (Pyongyang: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1987), p. 84

imperialism continue to exist.¹³ As long as they exist, socialist states cannot avoid the danger of being subverted by the imperialists, therefore, it is needed to keep the revolutionary stance to fight against the imperialists and continue revolution to strengthen the power of nation in every aspect. Kim Il Sung particularly stressed the necessity of continuous revolution in connection to the South Korean revolution:

Our revolutionary cause has not been completed, and we have liberated only a half of the country so far. US imperialism, the inveterate enemy of our people, occupies half of our territory, and Japanese militarism with US imperialist backing has revived and is intensifying its plans to resume its aggression. In South Korea under the occupation of US imperialism, the landlords, comprador capitalists and the reactionary bureaucratic clique of pro-US and pro-Japanese stooges are still entrenched and the reactionary colonial regime of fascist rule still remains. As long as imperialism and reactionaries and their underlings remain, we cannot discontinue our revolutionary struggle.¹⁴

Then, what is the specific content of the continuous revolution that should be carried on after the establishment of the socialist system? Kim Il Sung points out the three revolutions - ideological, technical and cultural - as the "main content of the revolution which the working class

13 Kim Il Sung, "Let us promote the building of socialism by vigorously carrying out the three revolutions," p. 87

14 Kim Il Sung, "Our young people must take over the revolution and carry it forward," Speech delivered at the Sixth Congress of the League of Socialist Working Youth of Korea, June 24, 1971, *Kim Il Sung Works*, vol. 26, (Pyongyang: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1986), p. 167

12 The Successor Theory of North Korea

party must carry out after the establishment of the socialist system and the tasks of the continuous revolution which need to be carried on until communism has been built.”¹⁵ These three are regarded as the major spheres for revolutionary transformation in achieving an independent stand of the masses.

The theory of continuous revolution premises on some concerns that a prolonged revolution causes a certain deviation in promoting the revolution and can weaken the revolutionary will and zeal for struggles in the people for struggles.

These premises naturally argue for the necessity of a leader who can guide the revolution with a correct viewpoint and position in revolution, carrying on the great leader's work. In order to emphasize the importance of successor selection, Kim Il Sung gave a warning in reference to the collapse of the former Soviet Union:

The masses' cause for independence, the socialist cause, is an undertaking that is accomplished through a long period, through many generations. If the leadership of the revolution and construction is not succeeded properly at the time one revolutionary generation is replaced by another, the socialist cause will suffer twists and turns and end in failure. This is clearly illustrated by the situation in the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union was the first to triumph in the socialist revolution under Lenin's leadership

15 Kim Il Sung, "On the occasion of the 30th anniversary of the foundation of the Workers' Party of Korea" Report delivered at the Commemoration of the 30th Anniversary of the Foundaton of the Korean Workers' Party, October 9, 1975, *Kim Il Sung Works*, vol. 30, (Pyongyang: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1987), p. 455

and the most developed socialist power but failed in the socialist cause because it had failed in the solution of the problem of succession to leadership. Because wrong persons succeeded the leader in the Soviet Union, the Party degenerated into a revisionist party and was unable to adhere to the revolutionary traditions and socialist principles; bureaucratism became rife in Party and state activities, and unity of the Party and the popular masses was not realized.¹⁶

In short, a connecting point between the theory of continuous revolution and the successor theory is a complex and prolonged nature of the revolution. It is assumed that "the transformation task, which the working class should achieve after grasping the state power, are unprecedentedly complex since the tasks cover all areas such as change of society, nature, and people" and that "there may appear a phenomenon of weariness and laziness in the people as the revolution gets complicated and prolonged."¹⁷ These premises induce an argument that a new leader, the successor, is needed to maintain and carry on the revolutionary cause of the working class, which the great leader has pioneered,

16 Kim Il Sung, "For the Accomplishment of the Socialist Cause" Talk to the Veterans of Anti-Japanese Revolution and the Children of Revolutionary Martyrs, March 13, 1992 and January 20 and March 3, 1993, *Kim Il Sung Works*, vol. 44, (Pyongyang: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1999), p.98

17 Kim, Jae Chon, *The Theory and Practice of the Succession Issue*, p.26.

III . The Emergence of the Successor

At the Sixth Congress of the League of Socialist Working Youth of Korea on June 24, 1971, Kim Il Sung called for the following:

As long as imperialism and reactionaries and their underlings remain, we cannot discontinue our revolutionary struggle....

It is precisely you, the young people of our age, who are entrusted with the glorious task of taking the revolution over and carrying it forward until our country is completely liberated and reunified and the nationwide victory of the Korean revolution is achieved, and until imperialism is destroyed throughout the world. Even after the country is reunified and the nationwide socialist revolution is won, our young people must continue the revolution until the building of communism is completed. Furthermore, our young people have the duty to fight, in company with the progressive youth of the world, to win victory for the cause of anti-imperialist revolution and the cause of socialism and communism throughout the world.

The young people should not be content with victories, but should fight unremittingly for fresh revolutionary victories, and they should prove themselves worthy heirs to our revolution.¹⁸

Although Kim's speech focused on the continuation of revolution, urging the new generation to carry forward the revolution, Kim Il Sung had Kim's own succession issue in mind.

18 Kim Il Sung, "Our young people must take over the revolution," *Kim Il Sung Works*, vol. 26, pp.167-168.

At the time, North Korea was carrying out a generational change in the power elite. The international politics was experiencing a detent mood among hostile countries in the early 1970s. Accordingly, North Korea needed to end its policy of military standoff of the 1960s and to concentrate on the economic development that had been relatively neglected. Domestically, the problem of ageing party and state cadres, including Kim Il Sung himself, surfaced along with serious ills of Bureaucratism, formalism, and organizational selfishness.

At the fifth party Congress in November 1970, 58 members were newly appointed, replacing nearly a half of the 117 personnel. As a result, the proportion of those who are below the age of 50 increased from 16% at the fourth Party Congress to 35% at the fifth Party Congress.¹⁹

In his talk to the senior officials of the youth-work department of the Party Central Committee and of the League of Socialist Working Youth (LSWY) on 1 October 1971, Kim Jong Il reminded the officials of Kim Il Sung's comments on generational change, and emphasized that "preparing young people to carry forward the revolution is now an essential requirement of our revolutionary development."²⁰

19 Kim Bon, "A study of Cooptation of the North Korean Political Elite" *Ph.D. Dissertation*, Kunkook University, 1990, pp.96-107.

20 Kim Jong Il, "Let us inspire the young people with the spirit of continuous revolution," Talk to the senior officials of the Youth-Work Department of the Central Committee of the Workers' Party of Korea, and of the Central Committee of the LSWY on October 1, 1971, *Kim Jong Il Selected Works*, vol. 2, (Pyongyang: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1995), p.276.

From the second half of 1972, North Korea carried out reshuffling of the personnel to support the succession system, in which it drove out some old Party cadres through a task of 'issuing Party identification cards' and simultaneously co-opted about 400,000 young people. In the following year, in February 1973, North Korea organized the 'Three Revolution Team Movement' centered on about 50,000 youth and student party members, and assigned Kim Jong Il to direct the movement. It signaled the actual beginning of building Kim Jong Il's succession system.²¹

Kim Jong Il entered upon his career on June 19 in 1964, the year in which he graduated from Kim Il Sung University, as a directing official in the Organization and Guidance Department in the Party Central Committee.

After being assigned to a post in the central party apparatus, Kim Jong Il concentrated on setting a clear direction and specific criteria for party activities, reckoning that the party tasks lacked these features. What he meant by having a clear direction in carrying out party activities is to establish the Kim Il Sung ideology as the monolithic ideological system of the party. In other words, Kim Jong Il aimed to sanctify Kim Il Sung and his ideology to be and to fulfill Kim Il Sung's instructions in every party task and activity. It was so-called a "struggle for building up a monolithic ideological system of the party."

The fifteenth plenary session of the fourth Party Central Committee

21 Kwak Sung Ji, "The successor theory and the process of power succession in North Korea," *Security Review* [Anbo Yongu], Vol. 23, 1993, p.37

in May 1967 has great significance for Kim Jong Il's political career. This meeting is evaluated as a focal turning point in the task of establishing the monolithic ideological system of the party in North Korea.²² In this meeting, Kim Jong Il led purges of the 'Kapsan faction,' including Park Kum Chul and Lee Hyo Soon, through which he laid the foundation for him to take hold of the power in the party and to establish the monolithic ideological system. In the end of the 1960s, Kim Jong Il came to the fore with full support of the first revolutionary generation who were then the leading group in the party.

Kim Jong Il was in charge of the 'three revolutionary team movement' that was launched in February 1973, and in September the same year, he was elected organization secretary of the Party Central Committee, which elevated him to a position of directing all the organizational and ideological tasks of the party.

In February of 1974, ten years since he entered the central party apparatus, Kim Jong Il was elected a member of the Political Bureau of the Party Central Committee at the eight plenary session of the fifth Party Central Committee, thus was designated as Kim Il Sung's successor.²³ North Korea did not publicly announce the designation of Kim Jong Il as the successor, but rising power of Kim Jong Il became evident when the so-called 'February Declaration', which newly defined

22 Academy of Social Science Historical Research Institute, *Dictionary of History*, (Pyongyang: science encyclopedia publishing House, 1999), p.5

23 Tak Jin, Kim Gang Il, and Pak Hong Jae, *Great Leader Kim Jong Il*, Part 2, (Pyongyang: Pyongyang Publishing House, 1994), pp.10-16.

Juche Ideology as 'Kimilsungism', was published under the name of Kim Jong Il. The 'February Declaration' presents a program of 'Juche idealization of the entire society'. In this document, Kim Jong Il formalized the Kim Il Sung thought into a system of ideology, theory, and methods of *Juche*, and also praised the Kim Il Sung thoughts for "representing the modern times and the historical period of communism". The 'February Declaration' symbolized Kim Jong Il's power to interpret the monolithic ruling ideology.²⁴

Juche idealization of the entire society implies more firmly establishing the monolithic ideological system in the whole society. In April 1974, Kim Jong Il proposed the "ten principles" to strongly establish the monolithic ideological system and the unitary leadership system in the Party, and instructed the officials in the relevant fields to work and live according to the principles.

He regarded *Juche* idealization of the party as a precondition for *Juche* idealization of the entire society. Hence, he instructed to preserve the establishment of the monolithic ideological system of the party as the basic principle of party construction²⁵, and introduced a

24 The "February Declaration" refers to Kim Jong Il's published document "on some ideological tasks of the Party for Kim Il Sung idealization of the entire society." The document can be found in *Kim Jong Il Selected Works*, vol. 4, (Pyongyang: Workers' Party of Korea, 1994), pp.7-66. Kim Jong Il published "many famous works giving the most perfect answers to the ideological, theoretical and practical problems arising in the revolution and construction" since he started his work at the Party Central Committee. The "February Declaration" is one of his representative works. *Korea Central News Agency*, June 18, 2001.

new summing up system of the party life in an attempt to build a society in which all people are loyal to Kim Il Sung and the Party.

As a result of his efforts, Kim Jong Il was elected a member of the Party Central Committee, a member of the Presidium of the Politburo, a secretary of the Central Committee, and a member of the Military Commission of the Party at the Sixth Party Congress that took place in October 1980; he officially emerged as the second highest ranking in the power hierarchy of North Korea and a successor to Kim Il Sung. The leadership system of the party was then reorganized centered on Kim Jong Il.

There had been no theoretical conceptualization such as the 'successor theory' until Kim Jong Il rose the official successor. Instead, North Korea began to develop a logical scheme to justify the power succession and to secure the legitimacy of the Kim Jong Il system while leaving the newly designated successor behind the veil.

Following the official designation as a successor, Kim Jong Il further developed and strengthened the *Juche* ideology through publishing a thesis "on the Idea of Juche" on 31 March 1982. At the same time, he led the "speed campaign of the 1980s," "movement to emulate unsung heroes," and "8.3 consumer goods production campaign."

It is speculated that Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il divided

25 Kim Jong Il, "Thoroughly establishing the leadership system of the party," speech to the senior officials of the organizational leadership department and propaganda and agitation department of the Central Committee of the Workers' Party of Korea, on April 28, 1979, *Kim Jong Il Selected Works*, vol. 6, (Pyongyang: Workers' Party of Korea, 1995), pp.287-302.

responsibilities in foreign affairs and domestic affairs around this period of time.²⁶ For this reason, North Korea must have felt the greater needs for theoretical systematization of a successor theory.

Studying the content of the successor theory, it appears that the theory was further refined when the systemization of the *Juche* idea and theorization of the leadership system theory were established following the publication of a 'collection on Juche idea' in October 1985 as to commemorate the 40th anniversary of the foundation of the Korean Workers' Party.

In his lecture note on May 31, 1986, Kim Il Sung defined the successor issue as "the issue of inheriting the position and role of the political leader."

In carrying forward the cause of the party, it is essential to solve the problem of the heir to the political leader correctly.

This problem in the building of a working-class party is one of inheriting the position and role of the political leader. The leading position and role of the leader must be continued by his heir. By whom and how the cause of a working-class party which continues throughout generations is carried on is a

26 Hwang Jang Yup said that the period between 1974-1985 featured 'Kim Il Sung - Kim Jong Il joint leadership,' the period between 1980-1994 characterized 'Kim Jong Il - Kim Il Sung joint leadership,' and from 1995 onwards, Kim Jong Il held the real power. *Yonhap News*, 23 October, 2003.

27 Kim Il Sung, "The Historical Experience of Building the Workers' Party of Korea," Lecture Delivered to the Teaching Staff and Students of Kim Il Sung Higher Party School to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the Higher Party School, May 31, 1986, *Kim Il Sung Works*, vol. 40, (Pyongyang: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1995), p. 95

vital matter which affects the destiny of the party and the revolution.²⁷

As mentioned above, revolution of the working class is a long-term task that should be carried forward from one generation to another, thus it necessitates a successor who can inherit and complete the revolution of the working class following the great leader. In this sense, a successor is “a leader who follows in the footsteps of the great leader” thus “a leader who inherits the cause of the leader and carries it forward.”

The succession issue in North Korea signifies an issue of succeeding the position and role of the absolute leader, in which a successor implies a future leader who takes over the position and role of the great leader and follows his footstep.²⁸ In other words, successor is not a mere power successor who rules the regime by assuming posts of ‘president’ or ‘general secretary’, but someone who takes over the position of the absolute leader in guiding the revolutionary tasks. In this context, it is said that “the issue of succession to the great leader is not a matter of transferring the rights and position of the leader, but of carrying on the idea and leadership of the great leader who pioneered the revolutionary cause of the working class and who have been leading it to triumph.”²⁹

28 Kim, Yumin, *The Successor Theory*, p.48

29 KimJaeChon, *The Theory and Practice of the Succession Issue*, p.29

IV. The Position and Role of the Successor

The successor theory is composed of the position and role of the successor, the qualifications for the successor, and the unitary leadership system; and its main contents are consisted of theories of Kim Il Sung personification, shift of generation, and preparation.

A successor to the leader, in the context of the successor theory, is a leader who has highest command and top responsibility in carrying on and completing the revolutionary cause of the great leader. Just like how *Suryong* is defined in the theory of *Suryong*, the parent body for the successor theory, a successor is defined by its position and role in carrying out the revolution rather than by specific posts in the party or state apparatuses. North Korea's argument is that succession essentially means carrying forward the substantial position and role of the great leader.

According to the theory of *Suryong*, the leader is supposed to hold an 'absolute position' and plays a 'decisive role' in revolution and construction. Therefore, the heir who succeeds the position and role of the great leader inherits the 'absolute position' and 'decisive role'.

The absolute position and decisive role of the great leader are so exclusive, sacred, and inviolable that they cannot be replaced, shared, or disturbed. These attributes are directly applied to the successor theory, which makes the 'absolute position' and 'decisive role' of the successor also exclusive, sacred, and inviolable. Whereas the great

leader took an absolute position and played a decisive role in pioneering the cause of revolution, the successor is suppose to take an absolute position and play a decisive role in carrying on and completing the cause of the great leader.³⁰

To be specific, the position of a successor is determined by the great leader and is divided into two significant periods, one in which he closely assists the great leader and the other in which he carries on and completes the cause of the great leader - namely, taking over the position of the great leader.³¹

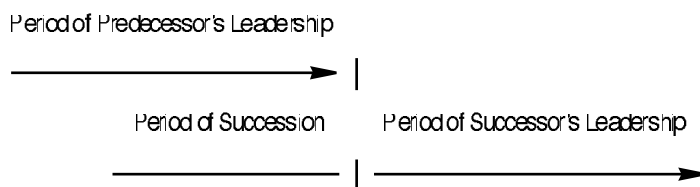
This is also the case regarding the role of the successor. There is a period in which the successor responds to and assists the great leader and serves to devotedly embody the idea and leadership of the great leader and there is another period in which he plays a part in carrying on and completing the cause of the great leader.

As it can be seen, there are two distinguished periods in which the position and role of the successor differs to a certain degree. The reason for this phenomenon can be pointed to the fact that the designation of successor takes place while the leadership of the absolute leader is ongoing.

30 Kim Yumin, *The Successor Theory*, p.61; Kim Jae Chon, *The Theory and Practice of the Succession Issue*, p.30

31 Kim Yumin, *The Successor Theory*, pp.61-62; Kim Jae Chon, *The Theory and Practice of the Succession Issue*, p.30

24 The Successor Theory of North Korea



The role endowed to a successor can be summarized as follows. Firstly, the successor is to maintain, fulfill, and advance the revolutionary idea of the great leader; secondly, to firmly preserve and continue the revolutionary traditions while advancing them to meet the new requirement of the times and revolutionary developments; thirdly, to strengthen the motive force of transformation, the integral whole of the leader, the party and the people.³²

Regarding the first role, it is argued that the reform movement of the working class is a struggle to realize the revolutionary idea of the leader, thus, it can only be completed when the revolutionary idea of the leader is fully realized. The most important duty of the successor, therefore, is to safeguard and embody the revolutionary idea of the great leader.

For the second role, the successor should preserve purity of the revolutionary traditions that the great leader has established and safeguard them from any maneuver to adulterate or wipe out the revolutionary traditions. Kim Il Sung stressed that "an essential matter in carrying on the revolutionary cause is the inheriting of its

32 KimJaeChon, *The Theory and Practice of the Succession Issue*, pp.31-34.

revolutionary traditions correctly”.³³

Concerning the third role, the successor should consistently strengthen and advance the motive force of transformation to a new level. The logic has that the successor should unceasingly nurture loyal revolutionaries to the great leader by strengthening the revolutionary ideological education and enhancing the study of the leader’s greatness to people. Additionally, the successor is supposed to develop the party, which forms the central spine of the motive force of transformation, into the perpetual party of the great leader by means of establishing the ideological system of the leader.

Because of such a position and role of successor, it is pinpointed that the issue of succession should solve the following two. The first, and the most important, issue is to bring forward an individual who is equipped with all the necessary personality and qualities.³⁴ The other issue is to strongly build up an organizational and ideological base and

33 Kim IlSung, “The Historical Experience of Building the Workers’ Party of Korea”, p. 96

34 Therefore, it is argued that: “a successor should be selected on the basis of his/her character. Character is an absolute and essential criterion in the successor selection, and other attributes are relative and inessential qualities. Being man, woman, young or old is irrelevant in the selection process, for any prominent individual can be chosen as a successor. It does not matter whether the successor has blood-ties with the great leader.” Kim Jae Chon, *The Theory and Practice of the Succession Issue*, p.43; In the same context, it is maintained that “In case an individual possesses all the qualities and attributes for a successor, it cannot be logically concluded that he cannot be selected as a successor because of his blood relation to the great leader,” Kim Yumin, *The Successor Theory*, pp.77-78.

to thoroughly set up a leadership system in which the successor can materialize his leadership.³⁵ These are considered important because who succeeds the cause of the great leader and in what conditions the successor continues the revolutionary cause are the crucial matters related to the destiny of revolution.

35 In the book, *Revolutionary Feats of the Great Leader Comrade Kim Il Sung*, published in 2000, it is argued that the successor issue should solve the following three assignments: "designating the people's leader who possesses extraordinary personality and qualities as the successor," "enhancing unity and coherence of the party and revolutionary ranks around the successor," "establishing the unitary leadership system of the successor." The second assignment, however, is similar to the third one in its content. Workers' Party of Korea (ed.) *Immortal Revolutionary Feats of the Great Leader Comrade Kim Il Sung vol. 20: A brilliant solution to the succession problem of the revolutionary cause*, (Pyongyang: Workers' Party of Korea Publishing House, 2000), pp.50-71.

V . The Requirements for the Successor

Requirements for a successor define who can succeed to the great leader, therefore, point to the personality and qualities of a successor. Selecting a successor on the basis of his character has been a dominant principle of the successor theory, which pinpoints the following essential characteristics:

Firstly, a successor has to show loyalty to the great leader, and this is a central component of the successor's attributes. A successor should possess ideological and emotional traits to respect the great leader from the bottom of his heart and to devote his everything for the great leader.

The successor's loyalty to the great leader implies loyalty to his thoughts and the revolutionary cause that the great leader has accomplished. Successor should consider fulfilling the leader's lines and policies as his lifetime task.

According to the theory of continuous revolution, the struggle to succeed and complete the revolutionary cause of the great leader is a process of fierce class struggle, which accompanies consistent disruption maneuver of the opportunists, traitors, and imperialists. Loyalty is above everything because revolution can degenerate midway if a successor is not loyal to the revolutionary ideology of the great leader.

Secondly, characteristics such as extraordinary ideological and

theoretical wisdom, outstanding leadership, and noblest communist moral can be pinpointed. Since the course of carrying forward the revolutionary cause of the great leader is essentially a process of adhering to the revolutionary ideology founded by the great leader and realizing the revolutionary practice, the successor must have a thorough knowledge of the revolutionary ideology of the great leader and embody it perfectly.

Additionally, only the leader with extraordinary wisdom can thoroughly grasp requirements of the times and aspirations of the people, and guide the masses. Outstanding wisdom, therefore, is an essential trait for a successor in carrying out important historical missions.

An extraordinary leadership is essential to awake the masses and guide them correctly to fulfill their roles since unfathomable strength of the masses in creating the history does not naturally exert by itself, as argued in the theory of *Suryong*. Only when one possesses the leadership as an extraordinary leader, he can push his way through a severe thorny path of creating the history, skillfully unite the people in a complicated situation, and organize as well as motivate the abundant creativity of the people in accomplishing the revolutionary cause of the great leader. Kim Il Sung praises that Kim Jong Il possesses such capacity and skill in the following speech:

The most important mission of the leader of the revolution is to develop the guiding ideology of the revolution and clearly show the road to be

followed by the masses' cause of independence. The People's cause of independence can overcome the trials of history and advance along the road of victory only when it is guided by the beacon of ideology that correctly reflects the requirements of the times and the people's aspirations...

Comrade Kim Jong Il gives wise leadership to the revolution and construction with uncommon leadership ability.

The ability to lead the revolution and construction can be said to find expression in the leader's capacity and skill with which to encourage the masses, the motive force of the revolution, to display their creativity to the highest... Success in revolution and construction depends on how the masses are encouraged to exert their unfathomable strength. If the masses are to make such efforts, they need to be awakened to political consciousness, organized and ideologically motivated. The work of awakening them to political consciousness, organizing them and motivating them ideologically can only be done by the revolutionary party of working class. This function and activity of the revolutionary party is ensured by the guidance of the leader with outstanding ability and skill.³⁶

Possession of noblest moral, on the other hand, is a necessary condition for the relationship between the leader and the populace; it is essential in securing trust and support of the populace while preserving authority and confidence of the leader. A successor is a center of the socio-political organism and a political leader who shoulder the responsibility for the destiny of the populace. Therefore, only when the successor carries noblest moral character which features unflinching love and filial devotion for the populace, people would entrust their destiny

36 Kim Il Sung, "For the Accomplishment of the Socialist Cause", pp.100-102

to the care of the leader and would be inspired to march forward even a thorny path, not only willingly but while regarding it as happiness and honor.

A final point of this logic puts that a successor to the great leader is required to have achievements that can put him up high as an approved leader by the people. This is because achievements are generally considered as realization and manifestation of the leader's quality through practice.

It is said that a successor who is equipped with extraordinary attributes "accumulates excellent achievements of ideological, spiritual, material, and cultural value, with which people bring him forward as a recognized leader." Accordingly, as the third characteristic, a successor should have absolute authority and confidence among the people on the basis of his achievements and contributions in the revolution and construction.

These required attributes are founded upon so-called "Kim Il Sung personification," which argues that a successor to the great leader should be someone who not only personifies everything about the great leader, but also is loyal to Kim Il Sung.

Touching on this subject, Kim Jong Il stressed that "only a person who thoroughly personifies the great leader's revolutionary thought, who is determined to struggle with his life to defend and fulfill the leader's revolutionary thought, and who has extraordinary leadership and genius wisdom, can be a successor. Only this person can continue the revolution based on the great leader's thoughts, and

further illuminate the revolutionary cause that the great leader plans and leads by developing it.”³⁷

Closely related to the ‘Kim Il Sung personification’ theory is so-called the theory of ‘blood-line succession’, which argues that a successor should carry on all the revolutionary heritage that Kim Il Sung founded and advanced in the process of pioneering the party construction and revolution. Thus, the successor should succeed Kim Il Sung’s thoughts, theories, revolutionary achievements, fighting experiences and task management skills rather than the biological blood.³⁸

The fourth feature focuses on generational relations between the leader and the successor, and maintains that the two should be in different generational groups. This ‘shift of generation’ theory concerns the age condition of a successor. A successor is a leader who should inherit and complete the great leader’s revolutionary cause, thus he should belong to the next generation and not fall into the generational group which carried out the revolutionary activities along with the great leader.

37 Quoted in Ham Chi Young, *Juche-oriented Understanding of the Continuous Revolution*, (Pyongyang: Social Science Publishing House, 1992), p.105

38 There is a different interpretation of the theory. North Korea employs the term ‘bloodline’ to implicitly stress the Asian patriarchal sentiment which argues for the leader’s successor to be the one who is blood related to the leader, thus to justify hereditary succession. Of the successor theories, the theory of ‘bloodline succession’ is considered most outspoken and reflective of peculiar characteristics of North Korea. Kwak Sung Ji, “The Successor Theory and the Process of Power Succession in North Korea”, p.50.

This requirement is premised on inevitability of change in the leader's generation due to the prolonged revolutionary movement and undesirability of frequent change. If a successor comes from the same generation as the leader, the leadership cannot sustain for long, causing an issue of designating another leader. A frequent change of the leader means a frequent change of the brain of the revolutionary movement and the center of the socio-political integrity, and it can be a serious obstacle in completing the revolutionary cause.³⁹ There is no doubt that this logic has the relationship between Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il in its central thesis.

The 'shift of generation' theory is closely connected to the 'preparation' theory which specifies the period for successor selection. The logic is that a successor should be designated while the leader is alive so that the successor can be fostered by the leader through a certain period of preparation.

North Korea emphasizes that fostering a successor is one of the most important causes of the leader. From the successor's point of view, "activities of learning after the leader with loyalty and personally assisting *Suryong's* leadership" are the "most rational and legitimate custom in preparing himself as a successor."⁴⁰

39 Kim Yu Min, *The Successor Theory*, pp.82-84; Kim Jae Chon, *Theory and Practice of the Successor Issues*, pp.48-49

40 ROK's *Naewoe Tongsin*, comprehensive volume no.16, quoted in Kwak Sung Ji, "The Successor Theory and the Process of Power Succession in North Korea", p.53

Three reasons are pinpointed as to why a successor should be selected while the leader is alive and should have a certain period of preparation. Firstly, the leading system of a successor can be firmly established under the great leader's guidance. Secondly, a schemer who scrambles for power may become active, taking advantage of temporary discontinuation of the leader's guidance or incomplete consolidation of the successor's leading system, if a successor is designated after the leader has retired unexpectedly. Thirdly, a successor can lessen the burden of the leader's work or worries by personally assisting him.

North Korea has propagated that the person who possesses such

41 North Korean publications that praise Kim Jong Il stress his extraordinary ability in two major areas. The first is his ability as a prominent thinker and theoretician and the second is his ability as a politician. Good examples are two volumes of *Great Leader of the Juche Revolutionary Cause, Comrade Kim Jong Il* which were published in 2001 - vol 1. <great thinker and theoretician> and vol 2. <great politician>. The first volume mostly praises Kim Jong Il for his genius ideological and theoretical wisdom and his great activities in advancing ideology and theories. The second volume glorifies Kim Jong Il as a politician who has a prominent leadership, iron will and solid political belief, unchallenged political grit and strategies, and noble popularity. Academy of Social Science, Kim Il Sung University (ed.), *Great Leader of the Juche Revolutionary Cause Comrade Kim Jong Il, vol. 1. great thinker and theoretician*, (Pyongyang: Korean Workers' Party Publishing House, 2001), pp.9-144, 181-183, Academy of Social Science, Kim Il Sung University (ed.), *Great Leader of the Juche Revolutionary Cause Comrade Kim Jong Il, vol. 2. great politician*, (Pyongyang: Korean Workers' Party Publishing House, 2001), pp.45-227; quoted in Park Tae-Sang, "A study of characteristics in depicting Kim Jong Il in the North Korean literature" *North Korea Study Group Paper*, vol. 6 no.2, 2002, pp.276-278.

qualities is Kim Jong Il. Kim Jong Il has closely accompanied and served the great leader, learned the leader's thoughts and task management skills, and demonstrated his unusual ability in taking up the leader's role in continuing revolutionary struggles.⁴¹

Kim Jong Il himself put great effort in becoming the successor to the leader. He particularly concentrated on advancing Kim Il Sung personality cult. Having his loyalty acknowledged, Kim Jong Il was finally promoted to a successor at the eight plenary session of the fifth Party Central Committee in February 1974 and was addressed as 'another leader' following the official designation of his successorship at the sixth Party Congress in 1980.

VI. The Unitary Leadership System of the Successor

If the leadership system that thoroughly guarantees the leader's monolithic guidance is defined as the 'unitary leadership system of the great leader', the 'unitary leadership system of the successor' is defined as a leading system for succeeding and completing the monolithic leadership of the great leader.

To put it concretely, it entails "the ideological system, the organizational system, order and rules of tasks, and others that are all needed to thoroughly realize the successor's leadership" and it is an "organizational and political setting in which the successor guides the party, state organs, mass organizations, and hundreds and thousands of people".⁴²

It is also argued that succeeding the unitary leadership of the great leader is possible through establishing a unitary leadership system of the successor in reality.

According to North Korea's contention, a revolutionary struggle of the masses for independence does not end in one generation, but is a far-reaching long-term assignment that should continue from generation to generation.

In accomplishing this long-term assignment, having the right man

⁴² Kim Yu Min, *The Successor Theory*, p.86.

as a leader alone cannot guarantee good results if other conditions for fulfilling his leadership are not met. If the conditions are not fully provided, unexpected and complicated problems may rise in realizing the successor's leadership when the great leader's leadership has ended. This can cause serious obstacles in the succession of the leader's cause.

For this reason, Kim Il Sung stressed the following: "in order to carry forward the cause of the party correctly, it is imperative to lay solid organizational and ideological foundations, and establish the leadership system thoroughly to ensure the leadership of the heir, while putting forward the right man."⁴³

It is argued that 'setting an organizational and ideological foundation in realizing the successor's leadership' is a task of solidifying a political base that supports the successor as the center of unity. This means crystallizing the party around the leader and the successor by forming the brain of the party with loyal officials to the two.

Establishing a leadership system of the successor implies enhancing the spirit of unconditionally accepting and realizing the successor's plan and policy in the party, and setting up rules and order for the party to act harmoniously following the successor's

43 Kim Il Sung, "The Historical Experience of Building the Workers' Party of Korea", p.95

44 Ham Chi Young, *Juche-oriented Understanding of Continuous Revolution*, p.112; KimJae Chon, *The Theory and Practice of the Successor Issue*, p.37

leadership.⁴⁴

As a successor is supposed to carry on the revolutionary cause of the leader, the unitary leadership system of the successor is essentially defined as “the leadership system for actualizing the leader’s thought and his line, advancing the revolution following the leader’s intention, and carrying forward and completing the leader’s cause.”⁴⁵

Four major ways are suggested in establishing the leadership system of the successor. The first one is the political and ideological unity and cohesion of the Party, which is to appoint cadres who are loyal to the party, and prepare them to be politically and ideologically death-defying corps and guards and to support the successor with loyalty.⁴⁶

Secondly, the so-called ‘monolithic management system by the successor’ should be thoroughly achieved, in which all the issues involving the party tasks, party activities, revolution and construction are concentrated on the successor and all the tasks are dealt according to the decision of the successor.⁴⁷ The ‘monolithic management system by the successor’ is a decisive guarantee that

45 Korean Workers’ Party (ed.) *Immortal Revolutionary Feats of the Great Leader Comrade Kim Il Sung*, vol. 20, p.67.

46 Choi Yong Hun, “safeguarding and strengthening the political and ideological unity and cohesion of the party is invincible guarantee for the accomplishment of the revolutionary cause” *Kulloja* [the workers], October, 1991, pp.48-52

47 The ‘monolithic management system by the successor’ means a ‘revolutionary institution and order whereby all the issues raised in realizing the party tasks and party policies are concentrated on the successor and dealt with following the monolithic conclusion of the leader.’

the whole party would move coherently following the unitary leadership of the successor and the idea and leadership of the great leader would be thoroughly achieved.

The third way is to set up iron rules, under which the whole party moves as one following the monolithic leadership of the successor. Only the establishment of strong organizational rules can eliminate unsound factors and eradicate any kind of unorganized and disorderly phenomenon that would go against the successors' intent.⁴⁸

Fourthly, it is requested to accept the intent and guidance of the successor with the attitude of absolute reception, and to thoroughly realize them with unconditional principles. This suggests that all party members and workers should consider the instructions from the successor as the most just directives and should carry them out till the end without any complaints.

As it can be seen from the methods, North Korea recognizes the primary importance of the party in establishing the unitary leadership system of the successor. The successor theory emphasizes that the successor, in principle, should be initially elected as the leader of the Party. The successor and future leader, therefore, should 'take the position as a party leader in order to build up his own leadership system within the frame of the party, and to enhance the central role of the party in the socio-political integrity, and thus to lead the

48 Lee Oh-Song, "Let us carry forward and brilliantly accomplish the revolutionary cause of *Juche* following the glorious Party," *Kulloja*. February 1976, p.49.

revolutionary movement in realizing the independence of the popular masses."⁴⁹

The argument is relevant to the position and role of the party and the leader in the revolutionary movement. As it is generally known, the revolutionary movement in North Korea is led by the leader, and the leader's guidance is actualized through the party. The party's fundamental mission is to complete the revolutionary cause pioneered by the leader through fulfilling the leaders' thoughts and his leadership. Therefore, the leader, the party and the masses are a 'socio-political integrity' that share the same destiny, in which the party sets the center of the spine.

Since the task of establishing the unitary leadership system of the successor and loyalty to the leader are regarded in the same light, its importance is consistently stressed. It is reasoned that a purpose of establishing the unitary leadership system is to support the leader's thought and his leadership and to carry forward and complete the leader's cause.

Prior to bringing out Kim Jong Il as an official successor, an article published in 'Kulloja' argues the following:

The unitary guidance of the party center is a revolutionary guidance that preserves the great leader's revolutionary ideas, the revolutionary traditions he has accomplished, and political and ideological unity and cohesion of the party. The unitary leading upholds the great leader's

49 KimJae Chon, *The Theory and Practice of the Successor Issues*, p.50.

plan, thus, it enables the *Juche* cause to be completed. Showing loyalty to the unitary guidance of the party center is, therefore, a rewarding task in carrying forward and completing the *Juche* revolutionary cause pioneered by the great leader.⁵⁰

Kim Il Sung also called for loyalty of the Partisan comrades to Kim Jong Il, stressing that loyalty to his successor should be regarded in the same light as loyalty to the leader.

The veterans of the anti-Japanese revolution must set an example in supporting Comrade Kim Jong Il... Anti-Japanese revolutionary veterans must sincerely support and help Comrade Kim Jong Il just as they have been loyal to me until now, and ensure that the socialist cause, the *Juche* revolutionary cause, is accomplished. Since our revolution continues down through generations, loyalty to the leader must be carried forward down through generations. When loyalty to the leader continues to be loyalty to his successor, it will be genuine loyalty, and the person with such loyalty is a true and loyal revolutionary.⁵¹

Therefore, "unceasing loyalty to the leader's successor is defined as party members and workers upholding high loyalty to the leader without pretension or change of mind".

Moreover, the party is requested to further intensify the ideological

50 Kang Suk Soong, "Carrying forward and completing the *Juche* revolutionary cause pioneered by the Great Leader is a revolutionary mission of the Korean Communists," *Kulloja* [the workers], April, 1979, p. 58

51 Kim Il Sung, "For the Accomplishment of the Socialist Cause", pp. 110-111.

education to party members and workers so that they can possess loyalty to the leader's successor.⁵²

52 Ham Chi Young, *Juche-oriented Understanding of Continuous Revolution*, pp.110-111

VII. Conclusion

The successor theory in North Korea, which was brought forward to justify the father-to-son succession, lacks generalization or sophistication as a theory. Nevertheless, the theory that has supported the designation of Kim Jong Il as a successor to the great leader and the establishment of his leadership system cannot be entirely disregarded when a new logic appears to legitimize a successor to Kim Jong Il. This is mainly because the frame of the successor theory is rooted in North Korea's sacred Juche Idea and the theory of *Suryong* (great leader).

The successor theory is composed of the position and role of successor, the requirements for successor, and the unitary leadership system for the successor; its main contents are theories of Kim Il Sung personification, shift of generation, and preparation.

In the successor theory, a successor to the leader constitutes a leader who has the top responsibility in succeeding and completing the revolutionary cause of the great leader and has the highest commanding power. Just like the great leader in the theory of *Suryong*, a theoretical parent body of the successor theory, the successor is defined by his position and role in revolution, not by the certain post or

title he assumes in the party or state apparatuses. North Koreans argue that what it essentially mean by 'a successor is carrying forward' is that 'a successor is succeeding the substantial position and role of the leader.

Since the leader is not an institutionalized post that requires elections or inaugurations, a successor is suppose to take over the position of the highest leader in carrying out the revolution upon the death of the leader. A successor may be needed in the practical sense, but logically, inauguration to the predecessor's state power position is not a time-pressing issue.

The position of successor is determined by the leader, and is distinguished into a significant period of time in which he closely assists the leader and a period in which he inherits, carries on, and completes the cause of the leader, namely a period of assuming the actual position of the leader. Likewise, the role of successor is divided into a period where he serves and assists the leader to fully embody his ideas and leadership and a period in which he plays a role to accomplish the cause of the leader. The reason for having the two distinct periods in the position and role of successor lies in the fact that a designation of successor takes place while the predecessor's leadership is ongoing.

It is argued that two most important conditions in resolving the successor issue are to bring forward an individual who perfectly possesses required character and qualities and to thoroughly establish the leadership system in which the successor can carry out his

leadership. Regarding the former, the successor theory pinpoints a successor selection based on the character as its main principle, and argues for 'Kim Il Sung personification' as a quality for a successor. The theory of 'Kim Il Sung personification' maintains that a successor to the leader should not only personify everything about the leader, but also should be loyal to Kim Il Sur

Studies Series 04

Kyo Duk Lee

Kyo Duk Lee

Kyo Duk Lee

Kyo Duk Lee

The Successor Theory of North Korea By Kyo Duk Lee

orea Institute for National Unification The Impact of Personality Cult i

n North Korea Printed: July, 2004 Published: July, 2004 Place of Publica

tion: Korea Institute for National Unification Publisher: President of

Korea Institute for National Unification Registration No.: 2-2361 (A

pril 23, 1997) Address: 35-353 Suy-dong, Gangbuk-gu, Seoul, 1

42-887, Korea Telephone: 82-2-900-4300; 82-2-901-2525 Fax: 82-2-901-2544 (c

) Korea Institute for National Unification 2004 Publications of Korea In

stitute for National Unification are available at major bookstres. Also

, contact the Government Publication Sales Center: Tel: 734-6818 or 39

4-0337 ISBN

N No. 89-8479-225-X The analyses, comments and other opinions conta

ined in this monograph are those of the authors and do not nec

essarily represent the views of Korea Institute for National Unifica

Contents

I. Introduction

II. The Origin of the Successor Theory

III. The Theory of Sur Yong (the Great Leader)

IV. The Theory of Continuous Revolution

V. Directions of Political Change and their Impacts on

VI. The Position and Role of the Successor

VII. The Requirements for the Successor

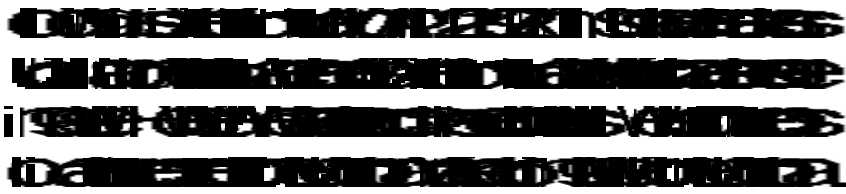
VIII. The Unitary Leadership System of the Successor

IX. Conclusion

Chairman Kim Jong II, the absolute power holder in North Korea, has reached his 60s. Ta

king the precedent case in which Kim Il Sung considered a selection of his successor around his sixtieth birthday, this signifies that the time has come for Kim Jong II to choose his successor or, at least, seriously consider the succession matter. Because there is no evidence of Kim Jong II mentioning the succession issue officially, limitation is apparent in discussing the subject of succession in North Korea. Deducing a frame of successor selection process is nonetheless

possible, though limited, through an analysis of the theory of the great leader, on which *Juche* idea is founded, and the successor theory, which emerged during the power succession from Kim Il Sung to Kim Jong II. The successor theory is a logic that was brought forward to justify the system of father-to-son succession, a succession to Kim Il Sung by Kim Jong II, in North Korea. Although North Korea itself does not specifically use the term 'successor theory,' there appear a few



r [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] system

of logic or a coherent contention in the content of documents that refer to the succession issues. Kim Jong Il did not become Kim Il Sung's successor on the basis of the

i

S, i n g a

nd conceptualized successor theory. A possibility of the emergence of a different theory, therefore, cannot be all ruled out if a specific person comes to succeed Kim Jong Il and if it needs to be rationalized. Theory may lead to practice, but more often, theory is generated to explain a certain existing phenomenon. Nevertheless, the logic that supports the system of succession, which designated Kim Jong Il as the successor, cannot be disregarded when a new logic emerges to legitimize Kim Jong Il's successor. Since the basic frame of the successor theory is deeply rooted in North Korea's absolute and sacred *Juche* idea and the theory of *Suryong*, the principles of the successor theory will continue as long as *Juche* remains to be the guiding ideology and will form the basis for a new successor or theory that might come out when Kim Jong Il designates his successor. This study focuses on identifying the significance of a successor and requirements for a successor in North Korea through an examination of the lo

9 ical composition and specific conte

nts of the successor theory

of understanding the successor t

heory is predicated on studying that theory of *Suryong*

the great leader) and the theory of continuous revolution. The

theory of the great leader, in particular, is a

matrix and origin of the successor theory: Praising on superhu

n ability and quality of an individual, it marks a central thesis

of the North Korean ideology, and a specific

ation of the subject to power the successor the

only it is also an impo

rtant component of the theory of continuous revolution which theo

ritizes power succession as a succession of a revolutionary
cause rather than a mere succession of the seat of power.

The theory of continuous revolution

is founded upon the theory of *Suryong* which equates a

revolutionary cause of the working class with that of the

leader and states that the revolutionary cause of

the working class ca

only be completed under the leadership of the great leader. Accordingly, a logical order of rationalizing the po

wer succession can be summarized as follows: Juche ideology—theo
ry of ~~the~~ ^{the} theory of continuous revolution—the successor Theory

~~이념의 연속성 이론~~
~~이념의 연속성 이론~~
~~이념의 연속성 이론~~

~~이념의 연속성 이론~~ the Successor Theory of North Korea ~~이념의 연속성 이론~~

~~이념의 연속성 이론~~ Theory of *Suryong's* a revolutionary theorizat
ion of the issues related to the leader, which summarizes its l
ogic as follows: "popul armasses ae placed in the cen
er of everything, and the leader is in the center of themasse
s." The theory of *Suryong's* a central proposition of *Juche* idea.

North Korea asserts that Juche Idea is aman-centered, not
material or psychological centered, philosophical idea
based on the philosophical principle that "man is
the master o

everything and decides ~~like~~ like man in materialism that is d
efined by social materialistic foundations, man in the *Juche* idea is
a motive force of everything. According to the philos
ophical principle of the *Juche* idea, man takes a special position
and role as the master of everything because he i
s a social being with C

h Chajusong (independence), creativity

...ndconsciousness. Chajusong is an attribute of social man who is desirous of living in an independent way by getting rid of all forms of bonds and fetters of nature and society. Creativity is a quality of man to shape his destiny by transforming nature and society purposefully and consciously.

Consciousness is an attribute to adjust and control all his cognitive and practical activities. On the basis of such an outlook

~~CHAJUSONG'S HISTORICAL VIEW OF HUMAN NATURE~~
~~CHAJUSONG'S HISTORICAL VIEW OF HUMAN NATURE~~

I II III The Origin of the Successor Theory 5

...e *Juche* idea considers nature and society as the subject of transformation by man, and argues that man elevates his position and role in the world through this transformation process.

The man-centered ethical principle sets the basic foundation of the 'social-h

...istorical principle' of the North Korean historical view. Like the materialistic conception of history, the North Korean historical view argues for the law-governed historical development, but points to "man" as the subject and the motive force in this historical development. This is where the socio-historical principles of "the popular masses

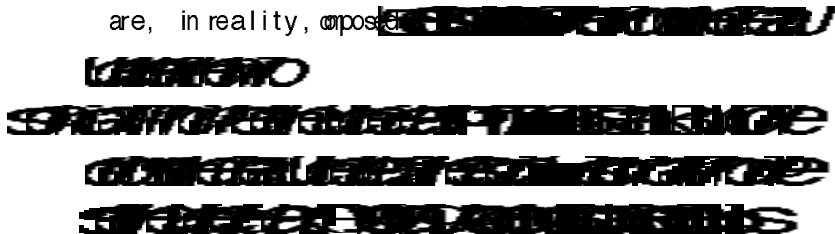
...are the masters of history" and "human history is a history of the people's struggle for *Chajusong* are derived from. The people's struggle for *Chajusong*, however, cannot be realized naturally, but can be

precisely fulfilled by the masses' consciousness of independence in promoting their own creativity. What is essential in this process is the 'le

adership of the great leader'. The following excerpt explains why 'correct leadership by the leader' is needed in the process of

historical development. The popular masses are the subject of history, but it does not mean that they can take the position and role as the su

bject of history by themselves in any conditions... The popular masses are, in reality, composed



h. 19 Hous

~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ The Successor Theory of North Korea

