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*English translation:*

**Instead of spreading ideology in North Korea and Africa, earning foreign currency rapidly**

**It has been argued that North Korea is focusing on earning foreign currency while leaving behind the propagation of the Juche ideology to its African allies. Reporter Hong Albot on the sidewalk.**

On 25 August, the National Committee on North Korea (NCNK) and the East-West Center, a private research group in the United States, held an online discussion on the topic of 'A Monumental Relationship: North Korea and Southern Africa'.

At this discussion, it was pointed out that the relationship between North Korea and several African countries, which have maintained close friendships since the 1960s, is no longer what it used to be.

Tycho van der Hoog, a researcher at the African Studies Centre Leiden, affiliated with Leiden University in the Netherlands, said that North Korea supported the liberation movement that was actively taking place on the African continent along with post-colonisation since the 1960s. He explained the historical background that North Korea was able to establish friendly relations with several African countries.

He added that North Korea provided arms and military training support in order to establish diplomatic relations with more African countries than South Korea, in a competitive relationship with that country, and at the same time made efforts to spread the Juche idea of President Kim Il-sung.

However, Van der Hoog said North Korea and African countries thought differently.

Researcher Van der Hoog: I don't think North Korea's efforts have been very successful. There is not much evidence that countries that were engaged in liberation movements at the time actually chose North Korea because of their ideological starting point. Those countries believed they had a real need for weapons and training, and in that respect they started a new relationship with North Korea.

In the midst of this, after the great famine of the 1990s, North Korea, whose economy collapsed to the point where it could not even afford the operating expenses of the North Korean embassy in Africa, regarded Africa as a major foreign currency earning base and put all its efforts into earning dollars, said Van der Hoog.

North Korea even committed illegal acts such as smuggling elephant ivory and drugs, he said, and was not afraid to commit human rights violations by bringing workers from North Korea to forced labour and giving more than 80 percent of their earnings to the North Korean authorities.

The explanation is that from this point on, North Korea began to regard African countries as 'money making machines' rather than ideological and ideological comrades.

Researcher Van der Hoog: So the relationship (North Korea and African countries) changed drastically, and North Korea came to see African countries as a means of obtaining foreign currency. And this is what we see today at the construction sites of various monuments.

Van der Hoog pointed out that North Korea earns foreign currency in Africa through various methods such as smuggling and operating hospitals, but the method that generates most income is the production of commemorative sculptures in African countries, which are actively promoted by North Korean organisations, including Mansudae Creation Company.

Previously, North Korea completed the construction of the Independence Hall building and sculpture in Namibia in 2014, after five years, and again started construction of the government building, the Ministry of National Defense building, and the munitions factory along with the Presidential Palace. It has been pointed out that sanctions against North Korea have been violated.

In addition, North Korea is earning foreign currency by making huge statues in several African countries such as Botswana, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, and Senegal.