Relief system -1- (65) P'an'gye surok ch'onje hurok kosol, sang

-- The Prime Minister under Marquis Wen of Wei (李悝), Li K'uei (李悝) said: When the grain for sale on the market is very dear, it harms the people. (Note: "People" here means the scholars, artisans, and merchants. (NOT THE PEASANTS)) If it is too cheap, it harms the farmers. If "the people" (non-farming occupations) are hurt, they will leave and scatter; if the farmers are hurt, then the country becomes poor. Thus whether prices are too dear or too cheap, the harm done is one and the same.

Those who are good are ruling their countries (states) see to it that "the people" are not harmed and that the farmers are benefited and encouraged. Therefore, those who are good at establishing fair prices for farm products (米倉) must take care to see that the crop year is divided into categories of upper, middle, and lower "ripeness" (shu 熟). In a bumper crop year, the rating is upper and (the government) buys up three parts of the crop and leaves 1; in a middle crop year, then it buys up two parts; in a lower year it buys up 1 part, thus causing that "the people" will have enough (to live on) and that the prices will be fair.

When there is a slight famine, the government then issues what has been collected for a small crop year. (Note: The officials release and sell off grain that they have stored up.) In a middle famine year, then they issue what they have collected during a middling crop year. In a serious famine, then they issue what they have collected in a bumper crop year, and sell it off (罷). (Note: Note that in the Han-shu section on Li K'uei 李悝 says: Those who are good at governing their states see to it that the people are not harmed while the farmers are benefited and encouraged. At the present time 1 fu (夫: a household with a male as head of household?) consists of 5 persons, and they manage 100 mou of farmland. Every year they harvest 1 and 1/2 per mou of grain, or a total of 150 shih (for 100 mou). If you take away the 15 shih they pay for their 1/10 taxes, this leaves a remainder
Relief system -2- (63) (66) P'an'gye surok, ch'ŏnje hurok, kosŏl, sang of 135 shih. If one man eats 1 1/2 shih per month, then 5 people throughout the year consume 90 shih. This leaves a remainder of 45 shih.

If 1 shih is worth 30 cash, (then 45 shih) is worth 1,350 cash. If the expenses for the spring and autumn rituals, such as the (contentType) and (contentType) in the shed , and cost 300 cash, this leaves 1,050 cash. If the cost of clothing per person per year is 305 cash (wen ), then (the family of 5) for the whole year spends 1,500 cash, but is short of funds by 450 cash. If there are expenses for some misfortune like sickness or death and funerals, or if there are irregular government tax levies, these are also not included in these (calculations). This is the reason why the farmers are always in difficulty, and are not of a mind to be diligent in cultivating the land, very and as a result the price of grain (contentType) becomes/dear. Therefore, those who are good at (intend to be good at) setting fair prices for buying up grain must be careful to inspect the crop year and divide it into upper, middle, and lower degrees of ripeness (crop). In an upper crop year the harvest is four (times what is usually is--600 shih per 100 mou), and (after deducting for yearly taxes and household expenses), this leaves a remainder of 400 shih (for the family). In a middle crop year, the crop is 3 times (normal production) leaving a surplus of 300 shih. In a lower crop year, the harvest is double (normal harvests), leaving an excess of 100 shih.

In a small famine year, the family takes in 100 shih; in a middle famine year, the family takes in 70 shih, and in a serious famine year, they take in 30 shih. Therefore in a great crop year which is an upper year, the government buys up 300 shih (from the surplus of 400 shih) and leaves one part (100 shih). In a middle crop year, the government buys up 2 parts (200 shih); and in a lower drop year, the government buys up 1 part (100 shih). This leaves the people with enough and causes the prices to be fair, then the government stops.

In a small famine year, the government issues what they have collected for a small crop year; in a middle famine year, the govt issues what they have
Relief system -3- (67) P'an'gye surok, chönje hurok, kosöl, sang

collected for a middle crop year; and in a serious famine year, the govt
issues what is has collected during a bumper crop year, and sells it off.
Therefore even though there may be starvation and flood or drought,
y by selling off grain the price of grain is not dear and the people do not
scatter. You take the surplus and use it to make up for insufficiencies.
Therefore it was applied in the state of Wei and the country was rich and
powerful.

With regard to the fact that in an upper crop year the harvest was 4 times
what it normally was, leaving a surplus of 400 shih for the family, in an
average crop year the harvest from 100 mou was 150 shih. At the present time
in a bumper crop year the harvest is four times that, and the family collects
600 shih. If you calculate the expenses of the people for a whole year, it
leaves a remainder of 400 shih. The officials buy up 300 shih. This is what
is meant by buying up 3 parts and leaving 1. In a middle crop year when
the harvest is three times normal, the harvest is 450 shih. After deducting
for yearly expenses this leaves a remainder of 300 shih, and the officials
buy up 200 shih. This is what is meant by buying up two parts and
leaving one.

In a lower crop year when the harvest is double normal harvests, the family
harvests 300 shih; after deducting for yearly expenses it leaves a remainder of
100 shih, and the officials buy up 50 shih. This is what is meant by officials
buying up 1 part in a lower crop year, meaning that they divide the 100
shih in half and take 1 part of it.

In a small famine year, the harvest is 100 shih, or 2/3 of normal.
In a middle famine year, the crop is 70 shih or 1/2 of normal. In a serious famine
year the harvest is 30 shih, or 1/5 of normal.) (END NOTE)

--During the reign of Hsuan-ti of the Han dynasty (BC 73-48), the Ta-ssu-neng
and Chung-ch'eng( 中丞 ), Kang Shou-ch'ang( 耕壽昌 )
submitted a memorial that requested that the border chün (commanderies)
should all be required to build granaries. And when the price of grain was cheap
Relief system - 4 - (68) P'an'gye surok, chŏnje hurok, kosŏl, sang

they would buy up grain at a price higher (than the market price) in order
to benefit the farmers. And at times when the price of grain was dear, they
would sell off grain at a price lower than (the market price) in order to
benefit the people (non-farming population). These granaries were called
the ever-normal granaries. (ch'ang'p'ing xīn-ts'ang 常平倉).

(Note: At the time there had been several bumper crop years and the
price of grain had fallen to 5 cash (my note: from a normal price of 30 cash)
and the profit to the farmers was very small. Keng Shu-ch'ang memorialized
for the establishment of this law and the people liked it. The emperor
then issued the edict and reward Keng with the rank of Marquis of Kuan-nei
(within the passes).

—. Ssu-ma Kung(司馬公) said: The Ever Normal Granaries is
a law leftover from the sage kings of the three dynasties of antiquity.
It was not only what Li K'uei and Keng Shu-ch'ang were able to do. When
the price of grain is cheap, it does not harm to the farmers, and when the
price of grain is dear, it does not harm to the people. The people have
enough food to eat and the officials take the benefits (profit) from it.
There is no better method than this.

—. In the reign of Wen-ti of the Sui dynasty, in the k'ai-huang period, 5th year
(585 AD), the Minister of the Board of Taxation (度支尚書),
Chang Sun-p'ing(長孫平) memorialized that among the ancients that
3 years worth of cultivation left a reserve of one year, and that 9 years'
cultivation created a surplus reserve for three years. Even though there was
flood and drought, nobody starved (無菜色). And all of this was
due to the fact that there was method to encouraging and guiding (the people).
and that reserves were prepared in advance. He requests that the people
in the prefectures be encouraged to establish Righteous Granaries (i-ts'ang)
in their villages (社). That on harvest day, in accordance with
how much grain is obtained they should be encouraged to pay grain (to the
granary) in xīn-ts'ang millet and wheat at the rate of 1 shih per family.
Relief system -5- (69)  F'an'gye surok, chŏnje hurok, kosŏl, sang would be
(that was the highest rate). Lower rates would be determined in grades according to wealth. The granary built in the village (she) and they stored would be the grain in the cellar. (it) The she-ssu(社倉) in put in charge of the ledgers and he investigated and kept a check on everything, and make collections every year so that there would be no loss to the reserves. If it happened that there wasn't a good crop and there was starvation in the village, then this grain used for relief grants.

The emperor approved it and the granaries were called i-ts'ang (righteous granaries), or they were called she-ts'ang(社倉: village granaries).

(Note: At the time (after the law was promulgated) wherever you went the grain reserves were piled up and the people avoided starvation. Later on because the people did not give thought to long-term planning and rashly wasted and spent the reserves of the she-ts'ang. Or they paid all the grain to the prefectural (chou) government. If there happened to be a drought, they would give out right away the grain that was supposed to be stored for future years. By the reign of Yang-ti (of Sui) the state was faced with financial shortages and took the grain from the righteous granaries in order to meet official expenses. By the reign of T'ai-tsung of the T'ang dynasty it was again ordered that the chou and hsien of the empire establish Righteous Granaries in order to provide against disaster years and it was not permitted to spend the grain on miscellaneous (things). In the time of Empress Wu (Wu-hou 武后) and Chung-tsung (604-705, 705-710), both public and private finances were short and in difficulty and they borrowed from the Righteous Granaries to meet expenses. From the shen-lung period and after (705-707), expenditures from the Righteous Granaries tended to deplete their reserves.

(END NOTE)
Mr. Hu (Hu-shih) says: In relieving the starving, nothing is more important than in getting close to the people. (you are going to provide relief to?). The Righteous Granaries of the Sui dynasties did not collect that much from the people, but they were situated in the she (villages) and the starving people could obtain food. This was not far from the fact that in later generations they also had granaries called Righteous Granaries, but they were situated in the prefecture and commandery (chou-chih). If they had a famine, then the worthless officials would not report it to the throne (superior authorities). Only the good officials would report it. When the report arrived, then the clerks could be put in charge of issuing (grain from the granaries). The transfer of documents back and forth made difficult and obstructed the paying out of grain, and the officials and clerks in charge competed to get the grain (for themselves). The ones who benefited from it were in general those areas nearby cities (walls) and suburbs where the people had the ability to go get (and carry) the grain themselves. How could people living in far off places take their aged (parents) and children several hundred li to get a few handfuls of grain?

In the Chou dynasty of the Five Dynasties period, in the 6th year of the hsien-te reign period (959 AD) there was a famine in the Huai-nan area. Shih-tsung (世宗 : 944-960) ordered that rice be loaned out. Some said that the people were poor and were afraid they would not be able to repay it. Shih-tsung said: the people are still my children; how could somebody's children be in precarious circumstances) suspended upside down) without a father knowing about it? And how could he hold them responsible and insist on repayment?

--Mr. Hu (胡氏) said: The granting of loans (to the starving) both benefits the people and is a source of trouble for them. It benefits them because it alleviates their immediate problem. It hurts them because of the fact that they must repay (the loan) at a later date. In demanding repayment, either one can be strict about the deadline for repayment, or one can collect interest (取息見息), or collect a wastage surcharge.
loan out rice and have the people pay back the debt in cash, or continue to
dun people for repayment even though they are poor and cannot repay, or
have the clerks falsify the granting of loans and collect (repayment) from
the people. All these things are ways in which the people are severely
harmed. The officials (in charge of the granaries) believe that taking (a
lot of grain from the people) during bumper crop years, and giving out only
a little (during famines) is the method to use. The officials in charge of
collecting grain make it their business to make collections on the basis of
the number of heads and squeeze (funds) out of the people. When there
is a great drought, there is no reduction of taxes; when there are floods,
there are no reductions of taxes; when there is crop damage from insects, there
is no reduction of taxes. The chief officials dun the people for tax payments
but they do not register the amounts (do not abide by fixed quotas), so that
they do not write down the fact that they extract payments from
the people's households in order to make up for deficiencies. If a family
is not bankrupt, then they are not dropped from the registers. If it is
by as bad as this when payments are made to the people, how much worse is it
when the officials are loaning out grain. The responsibility for repayments means
that the people are not left with any resources left over. Shih-tsung
(of the Later Chou) regarded the people as his sons and succored their
insufficiency (poverty) and did not require that they make repayment. This
was the mind of a humane man and the administration of a true king.

— Ch'iu Chün (丘濬) said: In this statement of Mr. Hu's, not only
did he talk about the evils of grain loans. At the present time we also
have evils in the Righteous Granaries. The Righteous Granaries were basically
designed to provide against famine (from bad crops) to prevent our people from suffering harm. But
the officials in charge when they make collections, they do not give any consideration to whether (how
the grain is of good or bad quality they are doing it) is good or bad. When the grain is stored, fearing that
the grain might get soaked and (rot), they do not wait for a famine to occur
Relief system -8- (72) P'an'gye surok, chŏnje hurok, kosŏl, sang
when grain is given qjg,
(before they give out grain), and/those who get the grain are not
necessarily those who are supposed to eat it, and when grain is collected,
in many cases it is not taken from those who originally received (the relief loan).

What Mr. Hu said was that in demanding repayment, either (the
officials) could be strict about the deadline for payment, or they might
collect a wastage surcharge, or they might collect interest, or they might
issue rice and demand cash for repayment, or they might dun for repayment
those who were poor and not able to pay, or they clerks might falsify loans and
collects from ordinary people. These several statements cover the various
types of evils in the Righteous Granaries of today. What is said to be
righteous, is in fact to do things that are not righteous. What was originally
meant to benefit the people, on the contrary has come to harm them.

It is only that I see that the business has become bothersome and the
clerks only act corruptly and that is all, and there is truly no benefit
as far as relief is concerned.

P'AN'GYE:

I (P'an'gye) note that: The village granaries (she-ts'ang)
were designed basically to encourage the people to be frugal so that they
would have a surplus to prepare for famine crop conditions. They should be
placed in the village (tang-she 當社), and the she (village)
should be allowed to manage it. They ought not be moved (the grain ought
not be transferred) to be the reserves of the chuup (prefectural towns).

This is why the (Chinese village granaries) are basically different from
the hwanja( 還上) grain loan system in use in our country today.

The so-called hwanja(hwansang 還上), provides the reserves for our
(army and) country (kun'guk 軍國). It has to be stored in the walled
administrative towns and the magistrate's office manages it. It ought not
be dispersed in the outer myŏn (districts). In later generations, the Righteous
Granaries were attached to the chou-ch'un (pref. and commanderies, and the law
Relief system prescribed that the officials every year would collect (loans) and disburse (loans). But because the hwanja system of our country also calls for loans to the people and repayments every year, the system seems the same (as the Chinese she-ts'ang system). Prior to the deadline the grain is given to the people, and later on they are required to repay it. The official bureau (agency) is in charge of the collections and chases after the people with punishment and jail. Therefore, one has the various practices of the officials keeping strictly to deadlines and pressing the people for repayment, the loaning out of a little grain, but the collection of large amounts, the force distribution of loan grants without waiting for famine years, poor people absconding (to escape loans), and the collections being made in their place from their neighbors and relatives, corrupt officials and clerks using deceit and falsification in order to make all kinds of arbitrary collections. There are thus all kinds of evils and harm so that the prisoners fill up the jail yard, and the (poor people) who are whipped and beaten are to be found everywhere within the jurisdiction. This kind of system is nothing but a net to ensnare the people, it is not the basic intention (behind the loan system) which is to save the people from suffering.

All the people said that Wang An-shih (王安石)’s ch’ing-miao fa (青苗法 : green shoots law) was no good, but how is this (our system of grain loans) any different from the ch’ing-miao system?

Something like the Ever-Normal system is one which in years of bumper crops does no damage to the farmer (because it maintains a high price for his crops), and during famine periods does no harm to the (non-farming) population (by keeping prices down). There are no evils to it either in the public or private sense; both the ruler and the people obtain benefits. As far as good laws are concerned, there are none that surpass this.

Our national law code also requires that Ever-Normal Granaries be established in both the capital and the provinces, but this has never been carried out. Why not?
If you want to take the best measures (at the present time, to deal with the situation), then (to handle) the hwanja grain loans of the present time in the various administrative towns, in all cases establish ever-normal (granaries) to pay out and buy up grain in accordance with the law (system). As for sach'ang (village granaries), then encourage and instruct the puro (fu-lao) elders of each village to establish them as they desire, and let them be managed openly and publicly (fairly: konggong) by the people and gentry (insa) of each village (sa), and do not let the official yamen interfere in their administration.

(Note: In accordance with the early Sui and with Chu Hsi's she-ts'ang system, discuss and deliberate on regulations (for the system). Let the people and gentry of the village manage the granary publicly, and as for the official yamen, it will only give aid and encouragement, and that is all; it will not be able to supervise or exercise jurisdiction (over the granary). (END NOTE)

Only after it is done like this, will (the right system) be obtained. Some might say that if the she-ts'ang (sach'ang) are placed where the village shrine (she) is located, then it will be difficult to obtain people from the villages and therefore one cannot establish (the granaries) there. Or even if they are established, because of people pursuing their private desires, they will gradually be abandoned, so what about that? (I) say to this that if the court with sincere mind gives encouragement and the people see the advantage of it and do not suffer harm from it, then it will become the established custom (among the villages) and there will be nothing that cannot be done. Or even if (the granaries) cannot be established, or if they are repaired (created) and then fall into disuse so that they are not standard (institutions), still they will not cause harm to the people every year (as the current hwanja grain loan system does — Kim, 590). If the people can avoid the harm (from the hwanja grain loan system), then they will be able
Relief system 11- (75) P'an'gye surok, ch'ŏnje hurok, kosŏl, sang

145, 7:35b
to rest easy in their occupations and devote themselves to agriculture.

Families will have reserves stored up. In addition the ever-normal

granaries can function to make up for shortages (in times of famine), and
then in famine years the lives of the people will be saved (succored). So

how could the hwanja grain loan system compare to this?

During the reign of Hsiao-tsung of the Sung dynasty (1163-1190),
the emperor promulgated an edict that the she-ts'ang method should be
adopted in the various lu (routes, provinces). At the outset, Chu Hsi was living
in Chien-ning-fu (建寧府), Ch'ung-an-hsieng (崇安縣),
K'ai-yao hsiang (開耀鄉). In the 4th year of the Kan-hao year period (1168) there was a great famine among the people of Chien-ning.

Chu Hsi, together with the people of the hsiang, requested of the fu (pref.)
requested 600 shih of ever-normal rice to be loaned out as relief, to be
paid back in the winter with interest added. (Note: The interest on 1 shih
would be 2 w t'ou of rice) The repayment would be made in rice. From this
time on every year grain was collected and distributed. In the case of a small (minor) bad crop, then the interest rate was reduced by
half; and in case of a major famine, then the interest was completely
eliminated. In the 14th year (1176), he obtained interest rice and built
a granary, accumulated savings and then repaid the original principle of
600 shih to the fu. With the over 3,000 shih of rice that was saved, they
(he) regarded it as (the capital fund) for the she-ts'ang and no longer
collected any interest (on grain loans). On every shih of grain, they stopped
at collecting a wastage surcharge (momi) of 3 sheng (升).

Because of this even though the whole hsiang might meet with a famine
year (bad crop year), the people were not lacking in food to eat.

(Note: In each she (shrine site) (granary site) a she-shou (社首) and pao-chang (保長) was appointed to keep the records and to divide
up the population into pao units. After clarifying those who had not
absconded, committed some crime or transgression or some impropriety of
behavior, they then in accordance with the register paid out grain. If any household did not want to borrow grain, no disbursement was made.

For the details of this system see the Chuja sach'ang samok (Chu Hsi she-ts'ang shih-mu) (END NOTE)

Later when (Chu Hsi) was summoned for a court audience he requested that this system be extended to a broad area and put into practice. Chu Hsi said: I would like the emperor to give clear instructions to the provinces that if there are any people or households that would like to establish (the she-ts'ang granaries), that the chou and hsien (pref. and districts) calculate and pay out rice from the ever-normal granaries (as a fund for the she-ts'ang). If there are any rich families who would like to issue rice to form the capital (fund for the she-ts'ang), they also should be allowed to do as they please. (do what is convenient for them). When the interest rice (that is accumulated) matches the amount (of the original capitalization), then it also will be repaid. And if there are local villages whose customs are not the same (different), they also should be allowed to act in accordance with the circumstances and set up a contract, report to the magistrates who will respect and protect (the granaries). And if they should desire not to establish a granary, the official yamen will not force them to do so, so that (the system) will not cause trouble.

Hsiao-tsung gave his permission and decreed that/permanent residents (t'u-chü士居) or temporary residents (寓居) of a hsiang, officials and people (shih-jen士人), those whose behavior was righteous would report conditions to the chou and hsien, calculate (what rice was needed) from among the rice reserves of the Righteous Granaries, and use it to make disbursements (for the she-ts'ang, peasants?). With regard to the actual collections and disbursements (of loans from the she-ts'ang), measures for this would be taken publicly by the elders of the given hsiang, and the chou and hsien authorities would not interfere with it or force (loans to be made)(exercise any coercion).
Relief system -13-- (77) P'an'gye surok, ch'ônje hurok, kosôl, sang

(Note: Chu Hsi once wrote about the Chin-hua she-ts'ang(金華),
saying: The reason why the customs of the generation are diseased (sick)
with respect to this is no more than because the ch'ing-miao (green shoots)
plan of Wang An-shih is a subject for discussion (is regarded as a good thing).
But under the green shoots system the people are given money, and not grain;
and (the granaries) are managed by the officials or princely men (insa, kunja 人士君子)
and not by the people/of the village (hsiang-jen). And in carrying out
(the loaning of grain), they are quick to make collections and do not
do it with any feelings of compassion or love (for the people). This is
the reason why Wang was able to put (his green shoots system) into practice
in one town, but could not put it into practice throughout the whole empire.

-In addition (Chu Hsi) also wrote that the she-ts'ang system ought
to be promoted. He said: If you have (good)government, it is the
people (having men of talent); if you are lacking government, it is the
responsibility of law. (yu ch'eng jen, wu ch'eng fa
有治人, 無治法)
this is a great statement that will never be changed. In the time of the
sage kings they ensured that if the people cultivated the land for three years,
they would definitely accumulate one years' worth of savings (stored grain),
and if they cultivated the land for 30 years, then they would accumulate 10
years' worth of grain (in reserve). And the people did not suffer from famine.
This could be said to be a good law that will last for 10,000 generations.

What is next (best) to this was the Han dynasty so-called Ever-Normal
system. Even today this system is in use, and this system has always been
a good one. However, at the present time it is only that this just
in terms of regulations, if
barely exists record books, and keys to the granaries. It has
no people to protect (maintain) it, then the law is no more than a law, and
it cannot be put into practice by itself.

How much more so with the she-ts'ang which collect food products
in isolated and remote villages.
Relief system -14- (78) P'an'gye surok, ch'unje hurok, kosöi, sang

and in their, they are not controlled by the regular officials, and in their management, it is not done by punishments of exile and transportation. If you do not always obtain men who are loyal, trustworthy, intelligent and perspicacious people, like those who (operate the granaries) at the present time and who cooperate with one another in spirit and devote all their efforts in being careful about the grain that is issued and received and block all forms of deceit and corruption, then one needs no time to wait and see that it would be difficult to maintain the law. This is the kind of a system which is worth reporting to future princely men of virtue.) (END NOTE)

Chu Hsi said: Since ancient times there have been two views on the way to provide relief. The first is to induce a spirit of harmony to prevail (感召和睦) (by conducting good government, Kim 594) in order to produce abundant crops. The second is just to have plans for accumulating grain reserves. If the people wait for the next famine to occur to manage things (without making preparations in advance, Kim 594), then what other policy can there be?

He also said: in relieving starvation there is no strange policy (that is needed). The best thing is to make a study of irrigation (water conservancy).

Li Tung-lai (李東萊) said: In general if one is to discuss relief comprehensive administration in a unified fashion, then one would have to say that the system of former kings by which they made preparations in advance (for famine), is a superior system. (the best system). Li K'u'eüi (李悝) 's system (buying and selling grain, Kim 594) is second best. To take stored grain and distribute it evenly (equally) and cause it to circulate, to have people migrate and grain be shifted around, this method is the third best. And if you have none of the above methods, the least best (worst) method is just to make gruel and distribute it to the people to eat.

Chao Pien (趙彬) was the magistrate (gov) of Yueh-chou (Chih Yueh-chou 仇越州). There was a great drought in Wu-Yeh (吳越).
Relief system -15- (79) P'an'gye surok, ch'ŏnje hurok, kosŏl, sang

and before the people began written questions were (sent out) asking to suffer from hunger, how many hsiang in the hsien were suffering from disaster, how many people were able to feed themselves, and how many people were eligible to receive food from the officials, how many places where dike and waterway construction projects utilizing the people for labor there might be, how much grain and cash there was available to issue (to the starving), and how many wealthy households there were who could be mobilized to contribute grain. To all the above questions, people had to reply in writing, and diligently make preparations.

P'AN'GYE: --I note that according to Sung dynasty law in areas suffering from crop disasters and damage they began construction projects and were able to mobilize people (for these construction projects), such as irrigation of farming fields, building walls, roads, dikes, construction projects or planting trees. The Chien-su (governor?) carried out an investigation in advance of the required amount of construction materials, cash and grain that would be required and prepared a list of the benefits and disadvantages and memorialized it to the throne. This purpose (system) was a very good one. Every time there was a famine year, the state would either open up the granaries (and issue grain) or move grain from other areas (to the famine region). Yet there were large numbers of starving people who could not be completely known (taken care of?). Even though there were free grants of grain (pai-chi che), the amount given out were no more than a few handfuls. In the rest of the cases, (the grain that was issued) was all loans at interest (that is, the same as the Korean Hwanja system). Thus even though the starving people got relief for a time, when autumn arrived and they repaid their loans, they had nothing left. Even though the harvest might be a good one, when it came to next spring, they had nothing to eat, and they were as poor as they had previously been before (during the crop failure time). Those who had no harvest (to speak of) were forced to take flight from their homes,
And the harm from the officials dunning them for debts extended to their neighbors and relatives (the officials dunned their neighbors and relatives for the debts of those who had absconded). Because the officials disturbed the people by whipping and beating them, many of the people shouted their grievances. And even though the officials forced neighbors and relatives to pay the debts of those who had absconded, they also were poor people who died, and that was all there was to it. In the end nothing could be obtained from them (this), and the official grain (finances) could also not avoid shortages and deficiencies.

How much worse was it when you consider that those registered as starving people were for the most part friends of the clerks in charge of relief, or relatives of the village headmen (li-chengli 正里) or household slaves and servants of influential families. As for the people who had no connections (wu-k'ao chih min 无故之民), on the contrary their names were missing (dropped) from the registers (those eligible for relief).

At the present time, if in addition to issuing ever-normal grain from the granaries we calculate and divide up the amounts, and count the numbers of old, weak, sick, xxx women, xxx—all those who have nothing to rely on, and give them free grants (pai-chi 白给), and as for the rest, if we recruit starving people in large numbers (from a broad area) and pay them wages for constructing dikes in order to build irrigation facilities, then if it is done like this, we will be able to both provide relief and build irrigation facilities in one fell swoop and kill two birds with one stone (accomplish two things in one fell swoop). The starving people will be fed from their labor and there will no longer be any evils from (corrupt) registration and no future concern because of the requirement to repay loans. In accordance with the fact that the people are recruited for work and go themselves, there will be no feelings of resentment. And if the wages we pay them are sufficient, then they will have enough to provide for the elderly and young. Thus many people will come to
Relief system

146, 7:38a

To work, and the benefits will be extended over a wide area, and irrigation facilities will be promoted everywhere, so that there never again will be any harm from a famine year and the people will not be lacking food to eat, and the state will not be short of tax revenues, and we will be able to rely on this for thousands and ten thousands of years. This system as far from the present system as heaven is from earth is a far cry from the present system in terms of advantages and benefits.

As for other construction projects, even though they may not be as urgent as irrigation facilities, if they are in accord with the needs of the times, we should also consider doing them (using labor on other kinds of construction projects as a means of providing relief)

(Note: The above section deals with the ever-normal granaries, the righteous granaries, and relief administration).