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A Biography of Kim Pyong Il: The Second Dauphin?

Abstract: This paper will explore the life and career of Kim Pyong Il (b. 1954), brother in law to North Korean leader, Kim Jong Il. Kim Pyong Il is described as being handsome, intelligent, good looking; that's why he was reputed to be a potential successor to Kim Il Sung. He was, is and will be always considered as a potential successor of his father, Kim Il Sung and therefore as a direct rival to Kim Jong Il, the actual leader of North Korea. However the first son of Kim Il Sung won on the run to the north korean throne. The paper presented below is sometimes based upon assumptions, which are normal in a topic concerning the most reclusive country in the world where each information is filtered and censured. As a great example, when the author has been in North Korea, leaving the country, each picture taken by him was severely checked by north korean customers.

Introduction

This paper is an attempted biography of Kim Pyong Il, the brother in law of North Korean leader Kim Jong Il. Kim Il Sung, the former leader of North Korea had various wives and mistresses. The actual leader of North Korea, Kim Jong Il (b. 1942) is the son of the first wife of Kim Il Sung – Kim Jong Suk - and Kim Pyong Il is the oldest son of the second wife of Kim Il Sung - Kim Sung Ae-. Kim Pyong Il had essentially a military and diplomatic career. He served in the North Korean Army in the 70's and 80's and after was set as ambassador in various Eastern Europe Countries. Concerning Kim Jong Il, he had a political career, in 1969 he was named secretary of the Propaganda and Agitation Department of the Korean Workers Party, the most powerful Department of the North Korean Communist Party. This paper will explain why Kim Pyong Il was often considered as a potential successor of Kim Il
Sung, and how Kim Jong Il coped with this issue.

This is a big overview of what we actually know about Kim Jong Il. The biography is derived from Japanese, Korean, western documents concerning the Kim Jong Il family, anecdotes of some DPRK defectors and diplomats. The Author also met Kim Jong Il and his family. Analyzing North Korea is an hard thing to do, as far as documents concerning the issues of North Korea are often based on assumption, that cannot be verified.

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1. The childhood of Kim Jong Il

Kim Jong Il was born on August 10, 1954, he is the half brother of the current leader of North Korea, Kim Jong Il and the son of the former president Kim Il Sung. He was born to him and Kim Sung Ae, Kim Il Sung’s former secretary. Kim Jong Il is said to have one younger brother, Kim Yong Il (b. 1955), and one sister, Kyung Kyung Jin (b. 1952).

He received the same name as the first son of Kim Il Sung, Shura Kim who was born in Viatinsk in 1944 and died in Pyongyang three years later. Various theses exist concerning his death. Soon after the death of his first wife and the mother of Kim Jong Il, Kim Jong Suk, Kim Il Sung married Kim Sung Ae in 1960, a beautiful woman 20 years younger than him born in 1932.

Very early Kim Jong Il started to hate Kim Jong Il as far as he was the son of the second wife of Kim Il Sung, Kim Sung Ae. Kim Jong Il hated his stepmother because she was involved in the death of his natural mother, who

1 According to defectors, he has other sisters and brothers, one of them Kim Kyong Il is supposed to be a major in the North Korean Army.


3 One of them is based upon the fact that he was estranged by Kim Jong Il at the age of 4 when they were playing in the swimming pool. Alison Behnke, Kim Jong Il’s North Korea, Twenty-First Century Books, Minneapolis 2007, p. 39.

4 Alexandre Y Mansourou, In search of a new identity: revival of tradition politics and modernization in post Kim Il Sung North Korea, National Australia University. Dept. of International Relations, Canberra 1995, s. 16.

5 Kim Jong Suk is the most important person for Kim Jong Il, Korean Monarch Kim Jong Il: Technocrat Ruler of the Hermit Kingdom Facing the Challenge of Modernity, Alexandre Y. Mansourou, Ph.D., Associate Professor Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies

6 However according to Kim Jong Il’s relatives she would have survived if some doctors were present. She refused each treatment because she knew already about the relation between her husband and Kim Sung Ae and therefore she preferred to die. As a result Kim Jong Il never called his stepmother „mother”. Kim Jong Il was born on February 16 1942 near Khabarovsk, in former Soviet Union, at that time his father was busy with the anti-Japanese guerilla movement. After the liberation of Korea, Kim Il Sung had still no time to look after his first son because of the founding of the Korean Worker’s Party and the Korean war.

On a total other way, Kim Jong Il received a true affection from his father, and Kim Jong Il spent his unhappy childhood as a half orphan. In the 60’s, Kim Il Sung, even said the following regarding Pyong Il: „a likely general has been born in our family”. Kim Jong Il himself also said: „I will reunify the fatherland by arms and worship my father in the reunification plaza”.

Kim Jong Il started his scholar road at the elite school „Namsan” in 1969 at the same school as Kim Jong Il”. In 1969, Kim Jong Il was named director of the Propaganda and Agitation Department of the Korean Workers Party. He used his power to isolate his half brother. Starting 1969, Kim Jong Il’s teachers have been expelled to local regions and permissions were already needed from the school to meet Kim Sung Ae and her sons.

2. Studies of Kim Jong Il

In spite of his problems, Kim Jong Il studied in Pyongyang where he graduated with excellent results from Kim Il Sung University from the Political and Economic division with a major in economics. Here he had a lot of friends, for instance Pak Chon Bo who was a son Pak Sun Chol, a former vice president of North Korea.

9 This school was often compared to the Japanese School Gakushuen and lectures here were only provided to children of the elite. Waldemar Dziak, Kim Jong Il, Wyd. Trio ISP PAN, Warszawa, 2004, p. 23.

10 Kim Jong Il, Biographie sommaire, Editions en Langues étrangères, Pyongyang, 1988, s. 4.


14 Vice-President’s Son Suspected of Drug Trafficking, „BBC Monitoring Services: Asia-Pacific”, 11th October 1996. His friends used to live in 20 persons rooms, but Kim Pyong Il had a room for himself. Each week end on Saturdays at 13:30 he left the school for one Kim Il Sung
During this time, Kim Jong II used his position and thought how to put away his family members. Kim Jong II started with purges and especially with the Kapsan group and with one conducted by an uncle of Kim Pyong Il: Kim Jong Ju. The brother of Kim II Sung was the first person of the Kim Clan to be put away of the run to the north korean throne. He disappeared from the political scene on this period and reappeared only in 1993 to the central committee of the party, Kim Jong II also weeded out some of most influent Kim II Sung's supporters and replaced them with his own clique. He also controlled the information pipeline to Kim II Sung, keeping important reports for himself. Kim Jong II also ordered party members to stay far away from Kim Pyong Il. Kim II Sung started to worry about Kim Pyong. Kim II Sung hoped that Kim Jong II would spare their lives after he died.

After having study at the Kim II Sung University, Kim Pyong Il studied two years at the Kim II Sung Military Academy between 1977 and 1979. He got two diploma at the Kim II Sung Academy. First as an infantry general and then a degree in military training. Kim Pyong II is said also to have studied in Warsaw in 1976. Kim Pyong II began working as a battalion commander at the guard's headquarters in 1977-78 and was still considered as a growing threat for Kim Jong II, having the support of some generals. Kim Jong II had a weak point; he was not a former military which had considerably reduced his influence on soldiers. However he had the support of old generals such as O Jin U and Kim Kwang Hyop who fought during the Korean war and who wanted to keep their privileges in case of a sudden death of Kim II Sung.

Besides according to North Korean officials, there was a time where Kim II Sung had considered appointing his succession to his three sons, „Jong II, the Party, Pyong Il, the military and the government to Jong II”. According to a north Korean defector met by the Author, Kim Sung Ae showed up and said in the 60's that „Kim Jong II should be at the head of the party and Kim Pyong II should be made responsible for the military”. Kim Jong II was afraid that in reality Kim Pyong II will be the next leader of North Korea, that's why in residencies in the suburbs of Pyongyang.

17 Donald Macintyre, A Hermit's Debut having run the country from the shadows, Kim Jong Il is now ready to step into the light. But who is this man—and can he save North Korea?, „Time Asia”, 7th September 1998.
18 During his studies, Kim Pyong Il had a great physical condition, practiced various sports such as ping pong; volley ball, wrestling (he was at the head of the sport section of the Nam San School).
19 Kim Jong II's half-brother Named to Warsaw, Kim Pyong II is said to have studied in Warsaw in 1976, „Agence France Presse”, 16th January 1998.

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the 70's he totally kicked off Kim Pyong II. Kim Jong II had also to cope with his energetic stepmother, whose portraits where present in Pyongyang. Kim Sung Ae who promoted Kim Pyong II in the 70's, Kim Jong II had to be careful in balancing relations between his stepmother's clan and his own clan. This situation appears to distract Kim Jong II from affairs of state.

Concerning Kim Sung Ae, she was said to be on fairly good terms with her husband's young brother, Kim Jong Ju. However, her relations with Kim Jong II have gradually deteriorated since he was appointed as heir-apparent to his father. When Kim Jong II was made heir apparent in February 1974 he began to thoroughly eliminate her and her children - Kim Pyong II in particular - from positions of power as a part of the so-called operation „to remove Kim Sung Ae's offspring”. As regards the Korean Democratic Women Unit, as chairwoman Kim Sung Ae was only a puppet, Kim Jong II's younger sister Kim Kyung Hee has been exercising all power. She lost her power in 1973. In the meantime Kim Jong II created the office 10 of the Korean Party which was responsible for regulating, controlling and being responsible for Kim Jong II's half-siblings in 1970s. It is said that rules of this department were known by heart by each north korean citizen.

Kim Jong II sent key members of his family to work at alternative foreign departments so that they could not interfere with his power. 1977 seems to be a critical year, Kim Jong II was conscious that his lack of military background may be a serious weakness for him, in opposition Kim Pyong II, who completed his first degree with high grade and in the military academy

20 Interview with a defector realized by the Author in 2008 in Seoul.
21 „BBC Monitoring Services”; 6th May 1995. Other example: in the so-called „Incident of Side Branches (Gyeotgaji saseon)" - the side branches incident means that they come from the same tree but the branches are different. This comparison was very often used through the party organization; Kim Pyong II and his mother were often described as branches off the same stalk, „BBC Monitoring Services”, 11th June 1996. Yi Yeong Seon with Kim Hyeong Rak, a former pilot of Kim II Sung's presidential plane was placed in detention in 1978 as a result of the discord between Kim Jong II and his half brother Kim Pyong II. The first one defected to South Korea. Man Ho Heo, Political Detention Camps in Relation to Socio-Political Change in North Korea, Kyungpook National University, 2004, s. 20.
22 Michael Madden, A Biography of Jang Song-Thaek: The Juche Jump (Hey, Mr. Jang!) [w.], Parallax, vol. VI, nr 1, fall 2009, p. 32.
23 Kim Chung Hwan, Political Personality and Foreign Policy Behavior A Case study of Kim Jong Il's and North Korea Negotiating Behavior Regarding the Nuclear Issue, Södertörns University College, spring 2006, p. 42.
and was in touch the new generation of north korean generals⁴⁶. According to North Korean defectors, Kim Jong Il has a certain „charismatic presence“⁶ about him and is personally engaging, traits which are lacking in Kim Jong II²⁶.


Discord between Kim Jong II and Kim Jong Il increased when he entered the Security Guard Bureau on the occasion of the Panmunjon axe incident on 18th July 1976. Kim Jong Il was the first one to hold a rally by leading his classmates at the Kim Il Sung University. Following this he voluntarily joined the mechanized battalion in the Security Guard Bureau with Kim Chang Ha, son of Kim Pyong Ha, director of the State Security Department and Chon Wi, son of Chon Mun Sop, director of the security guard bureau. He even organized a suicide squad for the contingencies of war against South Korea. Kim Jong Il was also then promoted to colonel holding the position of deputy operation officer in the Security Guard Bureau⁷.

As soon as he was upgraded, Kim Pyong Il started to lead a dissolute life with his friends, Kim Pyong Ha and Kim Chang Ha in his residence in the Taesong district or at his father’s house in Amisan⁸. He used to invite female members of the People’s Army ensembles, playing with them, offering gifts including watches with his name-engraved⁹. His supporters started to scream all over the country „long live to Kim Pyong Il“. These acts were of course totally prohibited in the North Korean monolithic system. Kim Jong II was informed about these events by 15 members of the older generation of the political department, and told Kim Chang Ha to be careful. Kim Jong II gave also an order to Chon Mun Sop to realize an investigation on his half brother. Every collected material was then shown to Kim Il Sung who enraged checking these reports. His reaction was immediate. Kim Pyong II’s demission was ordered, and Kim Pyong II was for a time discharged of army. Besides all members in the office of the bureau where Kim Pyong II belonged to moved to local areas, and a label was attached to their transfer that they could not be nominated as key members again, some defectors also said that people were expelled to local regions just for shaking hands with Kim Pyong Il⁶. Some of them were also thrown to labor camps such as Chun Hui, the son of Cho Mun Sop, who was sent to a labor camp in Sariwon (Hwanghae district). Concerning Kim Pyong Ha, he committed suicide in march 1981⁹.

After these events, Kim Jong II was no longer able to maintain his dignity and authority in the army and probably since this moment his army’s support was totally reduced. He was then sent to Moscow and to East Germany on the pretext of pursuing academic studies⁵. Next step was Yugoslavia where he was sent as a military attaché in 1980⁷⁰.

Does Kim Pyong II wanted to take power? According to defectors, Kim Pyong II was unsatisfied of his treatment as being considered as a member of the side branch family. However, Kim Pyong II agreed with the policy of Kim Jong II. Other Kim Pyong II’s family members were also expelled. Kim Pyong II’s sister, Kim Kyung Jin left with her husband for Czechoslovakia and his brother, Kim Young II to East Germany in the 70’s⁷¹.


Kim Pyong II was an attaché militaire in Yugoslavia between 1981 and 1983, but he was in Malta in 1982, learnt here English and got wedding with Kim Sun Gum⁷⁵ (b. 1954). They’ve got two children⁷⁶.

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²⁶ „BBC Monitoring Asia Pacific“, 22nd January 2007.
²⁷ Kim Jong Il was not only charismatic such as Kim Il Sung but also similar to his father. It is said, that Kim Pyong Il had some dental surgeries, he also changed his cut. Interview with former ambassador of Poland to North Korea; Martin K. Bradley, Under the loving care of the fatherly leader, North Korea and the Kim dynasty. St. Martin’s Press, New York 2004, s. 204.
²⁹ Interview with a highly placed north korean defector.
³³ Lee Han Yeong, Kim Jong II Royal Family, Han Gi Hong, Seoul 2004, p. 93.
³⁵ Kang Myong To, son in law of North Korean Premier Kang Song Nam, who defected to South Korea in May 1994, „Joongang Ilbo“, 18th April 1995. Kang Song Nam is a cousin of Kim Il Sung’s mother, Kang Ban Suk.
³⁷ The wedding was personally organized by Kim Il Sung. It is said that Kim Sun Gum has a political background; her family apparently is connected to the Public Security Ministry.
³⁸ Eung Song (b. 1981) the daughter of Kim Pyong Il lived 100 days by Kim Il Sung house. She is actually writing a doctorate thesis in Warsaw and is fluent at least in English and French. Former President Kim Il Sung gave the name of Sung Song to a girl borne to his daughter, Kim Kyung Hee and the name of Un Song to the daughter of Kim Pyong Il „BBC Monitoring Asia Pacific“, 27 February 2006. She had a similar situation to Kim Kyung Hee’s daughter, who committed a suicide in France because she didn’t want to marry a north Korean. Kimi has the same situation. Her father was very angry about the fact that she Kimi lead an extravagant lifestyle as a student. (She used to date with a French guy in Poland). Kim Pyong Il reduced to the mini-
He spent there 3 years before coming back Pyongyang. People kept their
distance from him even in 1985 until 1988 when he was vice-director of the
Operations Bureau of the Ministry of People's Armed Forces\textsuperscript{39} and was head of
defense ministry bureau concerned with equipment procurements\textsuperscript{40}. Being
31, he was one the younger 2 stars general of the North Korean Army\textsuperscript{41}.

5. The diplomatic career of Kim Pyong Il
5.1. Kim Pyong Il in Hungary

In August 1988, the official Korean Central News Agency carried a report
on 14\textsuperscript{th} August that Kim Pyong Il was moved to Hungary in order to be
the ambassador to his country. However it was unusual in North Korea to
appoint a such young man as ambassador in a friendly country. Kim Pyong
Il was only 34 years old. He became the youngest ambassador of North Korea
in a foreign country\textsuperscript{44}.

The diplomatic appointment was a means of placing the younger Kim
far from the center of power so that he does not become a rival to his step-
brother’s succession. Some defectors argued that Kim Pyong Il may have
been selected for the Hungarian appointment in order to study the Soviet
Perestroika reform program in a country that leads in its implementation as
far as Kim Jong Il was distracted from economic affairs of state\textsuperscript{45}. If it was
true, it would may indicated that North Korea was introducing a more open
economic system. However the post of Hungarian ambassador was a relatively
low one and an unnatural way to learn about Perestroika. Therefore it seems
more likely that the posting was made to remove Kim Pyong II from the seat
of power.

As soon as South Korea and Hungary developed relations in December
that year, he was recalled to Pyongyang after Hungary opened diplomatic
relations with South Korea in February 1989. North Korea accused Hungary
of „treachery” in opening the mission\textsuperscript{46}. East European sources in Peking
said Kim Pyong Il left Budapest without officially informing the Hungarian
foreign ministry. Kim Pyong Il left Hungary on 5\textsuperscript{th} November 1988\textsuperscript{47}.

5.2. Kim Pyong Il in Bulgaria

On the 12 December 1988 Radio Pyongyang announced that Kim Pyong Il
was appointed as North Korea's ambassador in Sofia where he stayed until
1994. Diplomats from the Bulgarian capital used to say, that Kim Pyong Il
was treated as a king, but a king in exile. He was even so isolated that even his
driver cannot answered him directly\textsuperscript{48}.

In early December 1993\textsuperscript{49}, he returned to Pyongyang. Meanwhile his
mother as returned to politics as head of North Korean’s women league. the
younger brother of Kim Il Sung, Kim Jong Ju Sun was named to the Politiburo
of the North Korean Worker’s Party. Reports in the South Korea speculated
that the stepmother’s change in position might have been a compromise in
exchange for the purging of her son, Kim’s half brother.

As the north korean economic situation was getting worst and worst,
senior Kim had made more and more frequent provincial inspections than his
son, due to his mistrust of his son Kim Jong Il, and was poised away especially
by Chinese authorities to take away the confidence that he gave away to his
eldest son. At the end of 1993, Kim Pyong Il personally reported to his father
on the people’ plight. This so infuriated Kim Il Sung’s that he proceeded to
criticize severely Kim Jong Il\textsuperscript{50}.

\begin{footnotes}
40 Seigo Sakamoto, North Korean leader Kim's Second Son Emerges On Political Scene, „Reuters
News”, 5\textsuperscript{th} September 1988.
42 His half brother Kim Kwang Sop was 33, when he was ambassador of North Korea in Czech
Republic. It's not a surprise as far as his wife is the sister of Kim Pyong Il.
43 Interview with a highly placed North Korean defector.
44 Seoul had before no formal ties with communist countries, though it has exchanged trade
offices with Yugoslavia, signed trade office pacts with Poland and Bulgaria and agreed to open
trade offices with the Soviet Union.
45 North Korean Leader’s son steps down as envoy to Hungary, „Reuters news”, 20\textsuperscript{th} November
1988. First North Korea downgraded its diplomatic representation in Budapest to the level of
diplomat d'affaires then closed its delegation. Then Hungarian embassy in North Korea didn't
close but Sandor Etre who was the Hungarian ambassador in Pyongyang had the rank but not
the title of ambassador „Reuters news”, 9\textsuperscript{th} December 1988.
46 „Kyonghyang Sinmun”, 5\textsuperscript{th} September 1994. Talks with Ko Yong Hwan, a north Korean
diplomat, who escaped from Congo.
47 Kim Jong Il’s half brother returns to Pyongyang, „Asian Political News Kyodo News
International”, 13\textsuperscript{th} December 1993.
48 Interview with a highly placed North Korean defector.
\end{footnotes}
5.3. Kim Jong II in Finland

Kim Jong II was one more time posted to a foreign mission. Speculation on him where still in mind as long as Kim Yong Ju was named to the Politburo of the North Korean Worker’s party⁴⁹. However the Kim Jong II’s assignment signified that Kim Jong II still wanted to consolidate his power.

Since March 1994, Kim Jong II was the ambassador to Finland where he succeeded to Choe Sang Bom who returned home for health reasons⁵⁰. However here it’s also unclear, ambassadors rarely came back at home for health reasons, and they are treated in special institutions in the country where they served.

Suddenly, the 22nd April 1994⁵¹, Kim Jong II returned home just having bought a villa. Giving rise to speculation that something may have happened in Pyongyang, caused by the fact that Kim II Sung, prompted by his skeptical view of Kim Jong II’s ability to execute the national administration and grasp power, brought back Kim Jong II. His return home was hastily organized, and didn’t go through the procedure of notifying the Finnish Foreign Ministry⁵². Reasons given where as always the same, he had some unusual contingency to finish in North Korea but in truth was probably elsewhere. Kim Jong II was supposed to cooperate with Kim Jong II in the post Kim II Sung’s North Korea. In 1994 when Kim II Sung met Jimmy Carter, Kim Jong II was not present. Kim II Sung told the former American president that Kim Jong may not be the following North Korean leader and therefore was not presented during their meeting. Kim Jong II maybe was still in the heart of Kim II Sung as his potential successor and it may explain his sudden return to Pyongyang explained before. It has even been also rumored that Kim Jong II, instead of being ambassador to Finland, was appointed to an important post in Korean Workers’ Party’s Military Affairs⁵³ Department or in an economic planning department⁵⁴. Another fact confirms the sudden increase of importance of Kim Jong II in his father heart. His mother, Kim Sung Ae made an extremely rare appearance to the public when she joined her husband during the visit of

Jimmy Carter and his wife Rosalynn on a pleasure boat on Taedong River in Pyongyang⁵⁵.

The sudden death of Kim II Sung in on the 9th July 1994⁵⁶ left North Korea completely stunned⁵⁷ while South Korea and the rest of the world thought who would take control of this country. There were some suspicious points concerning the death of Kim II Sung. Some people even claimed that his death was unnatural. Jimmy Carter who met him a month before told that Kim II Sung was proud of his good health⁵⁸.

Kim II Sung death facilitated the Kim Jong II accession to power having besides the control of the party and the support of most influential generals. Kim II Sung’s funeral was a perfect example of the strategy of Kim Jong II concerning elimination of its rival. During the ceremony, Kim Jong II was present however in the official list of those presents at the ceremony there were no mention of his presence or that of Kim Sung Ae. Moreover all his pictures, including his mother Kim Sung Ae, were edited out⁵⁹. Kim Jong II came back to Helsinki as far as funeral of his father ended⁶⁰ and confirmed that he was here present⁶¹. On the 2nd of September 1994, in an interview with a Finnish newspaper he nervously indicated that “Kim Jong II was already chosen as the next leader of North Korea twenty years before”⁶².

It was after the eighties that the movement to oppose the Kim II Sung-Kim Jong II system began to appear within the military. In January 1982, the first session of Seventh Supreme People’s Assembly was abruptly suspended. In addition, some contend that the fifth session of the Sixth Party Central Committee was changed due to the demand and pressure by young military officers. In December 1994, fire was exchanged between the followers of Kim Jong II and the followers of Kim Pyong II in which eight major figures died and Kim Pyong II’s followers were repressed. In April 1995 there was a rumor which

⁵⁰ Kim II Sung’s younger son becomes ambassador to Finland, „Agence France Presse”, 18th March 1994, Choe Sang Bom was very quickly assigned ambassador to Nigeria. DPKR Ambassador Restates Commitment to Reunification, „Xinhua News Agency”, 1st November 1995.
⁵² Moreover he even missed the Finnish president’s annual reception for members of the diplomatic corps, an occasion in which a newly named ambassador couldn’t miss. Kim II Sung’s Second Son Kim Pyong II Reportedly Assumes Military Post, „BBC Monitoring Services: Asia-Pacific”, „BBC Monitoring Services”, 16th June 1994.
⁵⁸ No foreigners were allowed to attend Kim II Sung’s funeral, which was totally unimaginable for a man who loved to have foreign visitors attend his big ceremonies. Another suspicion emerged from the realized autopsy, which is hard to imagine in Confucian society. The autopsy was probably done in order to cover up any possible signs of an assassination. Michael Underdown, Moving mountains, whipping up whirlwinds, Political succession in North Korea, Australian Parliamentary Research Service, 1994, nr 16, p. 8.
was propagated from Seoul, in which Kim Pyong Il was summoned to North Korea because more than 50 of his followers were confined to their houses63.

5.4. Kim Pyong Il in Poland

After having lived 4 years in Helsinki, Kim Pyong Il was sent in Warsaw where he is still residing. Already at the end of 1997, it has been said that Kim Pyong Il was named as the north korean ambassador to Poland. Kim Pyong Il left Helsinki a few days after the closing of his embassy and moved to Warsaw in January 199864.

In winter 199765 according to Park Gab Dong a sector of the youth corps and the military tried to get rid of Kim Jong Il and replace him with Kim Pyong Il. But the North Korean leader quickly. Kim Jong Il liquidated more than 30 000 members of the North Korean Army, removed Kim Sung Ae, from her post as head of the women's league in April 1997, she also failed to obtain candidacy for the Supreme People Assembly elections. Kim Pyong Il also disappeared from his post in the North Korean embassy in Warsaw66.

There was a delay in the Kim Pyong Il's credential presentation, which was due to a protocol problem. According to the South Korean embassy in the Polish capital, Kim Pyong Il presented his credential signed by Kim Yong Nam67 to Polish President Alexander Kwasniewski only on Tuesday 17th November 199868 which also caused speculation about his fate in Kim Jong II. Until 1997, North Korea had issued credentials in the name of the late Kim II Sung. North Korea began issuing credentials in the name of Kim Yong Nam, a north Korean pro-eminent politician...and a cousin of Kim II Sung. During these 10 months, Kim Pyong Il has avoided appearing at formal diplomatic events.

Kim Pyong Il may have still a key role in North Korea, during his journey

63 Past military coup attempts in North Korea, „BBC Monitoring Services“, 20th May 1995.
64 1994 was a year where North Korea closed an important number of its embassies including Finland. North Korea closed its embassies in order to save foreign exchange reserves and to prevent form the escape of north korean diplomats like Chang Sung Kil, north korean ambassador to Egypt who escaped from this country in 1997. It has been also rumoured that as far as Kim Pyong Il came back from Pongyang without his family he was looking for an asylum in Austria where his sister used to live. He may have decided to seek asylum for fear of being punished for not drawing in enough foreign currency. North Korea has used its diplomats for smuggling and other illegal trade as a desperate way to earn foreign currency. Robert Daniel Wallace, Subsisting the Regime, North Korea's Quest for financial support, University. Press of America, Lanham 2007, p. 102.
65 Janet Snyder, North Korean exiles ready to take over, „Reuters news“, 7th October 1998.

in Pyongyang in the summer 2007, he was supposed to try to get an upper position in his home country and he wanted to protect his family, his daughter was seen in Beijing69. He visited Switzerland to get living expenses and money from Ri Chol, a former tutor of Kim Jong Il children. Some rumors says also, that he may be involved in the letting out of diplomatic buildings at the North Korean embassy of Warsaw. It means that Kim Pyong II still represent something in the Kim Jong Il's system as far as he's connected to Kim Jong Il's advisors.

That’s why a question remains, what is actually the role of Kim Pyong II, the former second dauphin?

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