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Record of Conversation between Comrade Kim Il Sung and Comrade Deng Xiaoping

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Summary:

Deng Xiaoping and Kim Il Sung discuss a range of issues, including agriculture in North Korea, Koreans in Japan, and the situation in South Korea.

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[Conversation during the visit of the Korean Workers' Party Central Standing Committee Members on the morning of September 10, 1961 to the residence of the Chinese Communist Party delegation]

Korean representatives: Kim Il Sung, Choe Yong-geon, Pak Gum-cheol, Pak Chong-ae, Kim Gwang-hyeop, Jung Il-yong, Kim Chang-man, Ri Hyo-sun, Nam Il

Chinese representatives: Deng Xiaoping, Kang Sheng, Wu Xiuquan, Hao Deqing

Present: Wang Li, Xi Daochong

Interpreter: Kim Soon Ho [Korean interpreter]

Deng Xiaoping: We should pay you a visit. You are very busy. Chairman Mao sends you [referring to Kim Il Sung] his regards.

Kim Il Sung: Thank you. How is your grain yield this year?

Deng: There were severe disasters. There's been a worldwide drought this year. According to the scientists, it's due to the sunspot, and the dry weather would persist for five years. But we aren't quite sure that the scientists are right. Historically, there were droughts that lasted for more than five years. The United States experienced draught for half the year and Canada, for more than a half. For us, conditions in the Sichuan, Guangdong and Hubei provinces were more serious. We had good harvests for nine years and severe disasters for two. [North] Korea did fairly well this year.

Kim: [North] Korea also saw unusual weather patterns this year. It's rare to have heavy rainfall in August.

Deng: Our cotton production was badly affected by the drought. The rivers dried up and we had to grow sorghum instead. Our work was better than the year before, the masses showed good initiative.

Kim: Every year brings different experiences.

Deng: Hopefully the next year will be a smooth-sailing one. A moderate year without the need to import food would be good enough. Your people are well-groomed.

Kim: Next year we can ease some of our problems with clothing. We plan to produce 10,000 tons of vinalon. It doesn't matter so much in the summer but it's not so good in winter.

Deng: You can rear sheep.

Kim: We don't have many sheep, 10,000 of them.

Deng: Sheep don't eat grain. It takes eighty to a hundred jin of grain to raise one pig. It's unsustainable. There is room for development in terms the sheep we rear.

Kim: It still takes chemistry to resolve the issue.

Deng: We'll learn from you when you succeed.

Kim: We've already succeeded. The Soviet experts said that it would take a year and a half. We said it would take six months. 40,000 tons of calcium carbide can produce billions of tons [original unclear] of vinalon

Deng: You need to use electricity.

Kim: We won't need to use electricity in future. We can use oxygen.

Deng: When you have it up and running, we'll learn from you. Where is your man who invented vinalon?

Kim: He went to South Korea after inventing it in Japan, but there was nothing he could do, the Japanese had already produced it by then. Later he came to the North. During the war, we built him a small factory for his experiments. It could produce three to four hundred tons. Thereafter we built a big factory to ramp up production, and there were still a few problems that were unresolved. Everyone in his family are chemists, they are able and had been to Germany and the Soviet Union. There were people in the Soviet Union who said that the costs of using calcium carbide were high. We didn't think so. We have already woven them into textiles and they are thick enough for winter. You can go and take a look.

Deng: We won't understand a thing. There's nothing much to see at a chemical plant.

Kim: You'll just be looking at test tubes. Ri Sung-gi is a very honest man. After he returned to Korea, he knew to ask Syngman Rhee for money to build a factory, but Syngman Rhee was unwilling to do so. He came to the North and lived in austerity. He could endure hardship and wouldn't spend the money he was given. He didn't want a car either. There are still more than 300 Korean scientists in Japan. Japan no longer allows Korean nationals learn science ever since we industrialized.

Deng: You have a group of scientists in the United States too.

Kim: We must get them to return.

Deng: A minority had returned and made some impact.

Kim: There were 70,000 Koreans living in Japan who returned. The work of some academics and scientists are not bad but there are also a small number of rogues and bad elements

Deng: You are very busy now.

Kim: Not very busy. There were 1200 representatives, and also activists who sat in. There were more than 2,000 people in total.

Deng: Pyongyang looks lovely and very well planned. The future target for Beijing is seven million people. That's too big a number and there were many problems. Now 20 million people nationwide have to return to the villages, and we have already made 8 million do so.

Kim: We focused too much on our industries the year before last and this affected the agricultural industry. In order to prevent the impact of a future war, our industrial development has to be dispersed. This may seem to cost more money but in fact it's very cheap and very good.

Deng: Our coal is in short supply. It's mainly the cities that are using coal. We need 90 million tons.

Kim: Pyongyang restricts the population to 800,000 but people are still coming.

Deng: By how much does Pyongyang's population increase every year?

Jung Il-yong: There is an increase of 60,000 people every year, i.e. more than 3 percent.

Deng: It's good for your population to increase a little.

Kim: We see an increase of 350,000 people every year, and now our population is 11 million. The South Korean population is also growing quickly.

Deng: The Orientals are good at bearing children.

Kang: Does the increase in population take into account those who died?

Deng: It's progressively increasing, which is very good. Our other sectors are still doing well but the light industries that depend on agricultural raw materials face more difficulties. The heavy industries are somewhat affected. We summed up two learning points: the first is that we can achieve a great leap. The second is that we advanced too quickly, up by more than 40 percent. It would have been better at 30 percent.

Kim: Ours was 18 percent this year, which laid the foundation. It will be 25 percent next year.

Deng: You have maintained a steady pace, and kept the Chollima [movement] going. We were a little late in doing so.

Kim: I told Kosygin how much their increase would be next year. I said 25 percent and he said that was too high. He only approved after I explained to him.

Kang Sheng: Did you complete your Five-Year Plan one year or two and a half years early?

Kim: We completed everything one and a half years early.

Deng: Premier Zhou said in the report that a 20 percent growth would be a leap, 25 percent would be a great leap, and 30 percent would be an exceptionally great leap.

Kim: Backward Oriental countries like ours need to increase the people's drive. The people's drive is inexhaustible. We must increase their drive.

Deng: Qiong xiong e ji, but omit the two characters at the back. [The original four-character phrase means "evil to the extreme" but by omitting the last two

characters, the meaning becomes "to be driven by poverty".]

Kim: If we don't count the potatoes, we produced 4.5 million tons of food this year. Next year, we plan to produce 5 million tons of food, 250 million meters of cloth, 1.2 million tons of steel, 800,000 tons of fish. We have discussed this plan with everyone and we are all confident.

Deng: If you can produce 5 million tons of food, your food problem will be solved. You will be first among the 12 fraternal countries to do so.

Kim: We planted 500,000 jeongbo of paddy this year and will increase it to 700,000 jeongbo next year. Paddy is a high-yield crop. We tried growing wheat for a few years and it failed. They grew well initially but failed when there was too much rain as they ripened. Now we've switched to growing corn and plus intercropping, we can yield three tons for every jeongbo.

Deng: Three tons is a lot. We consider 100kg on average to be not bad.

Kim: The millet did not do so well. We have one type that is every good, it ripens 40 day after planting. The yield is poor if you plant it in spring but good when you plant it in autumn. It can yield up to two tons per jeongbo, which is more productive than sorghum.

Deng: Do give us some to bring home.

Kim: You have to avoid planting it during the rainy season.

Wu Xiuquan: When do we plant them?

Kim: In July. It doesn't take a lot of manpower, and can be eaten very soon after being planted.

Deng: The Soviets grow rye, which is poorer in yield but very hardy in cold weather. We had also grown it in Northeast China, but in very low quantities.

Kang Sheng: Do you produce a lot of soybeans?

Kim: Mainly during intercropping, we dare not plant too much because of a food issue. Now we have planted 500 hectares. Planting soybeans even helps to make the land fertile.

Deng: Are there more difficulties in agriculture?

Kim: The difficulty we face in agriculture is the shortage of land: There are a lot of hilly areas and frequent droughts. Usage of hydropower has reached 150,000 kilowatts and it takes a lot of effort. Fertilizer is another issue. Japan uses 700 kilograms of fertilizer per hectare, while we only have 200 kilograms. This year we have 300 kilograms. That wastes electricity and money. South Hwanghae Province has the best irrigation system, which is already completed. We don't use many tractors.

Deng: We have mechanization only for plowing land. Because we are engaging in intensive farming and intercropping, it's difficult to mechanize everything. The farmers won't be happy either. It can be done in Heilongjiang. Our arable land is even

lesser than yours.

Kim: Kosygin came and said we couldn't do mechanization. I said we weren't going to do it. We advocate fishing and aquaculture.

Deng: [I] watched a film about fishing last night, [I] oppose conservatism. We too have a very long coastline.

Kim: It's very worthwhile to fish. One small boat can yield 20 tons of fish in a year and [original unclear] 8 tons of pork. You can even rear seafood in the sea.

Deng: Do you harvest fish in the east coast?

Kim: We harvest Alaskan Pollock in the east coast. They don't leave and are patriotic.

Deng: You harvest fish on both sides of the coastline. Yesterday, we had [original unclear] fish, which developed from three fishes. These three fishes should get an award.

Kim: The weather is excellent today.

Deng: Beijing has many sandstorms. Pyongyang is very beautiful. There are mountains but not high ones.

Kim: This island is known as Rüngrado.

Deng: It's better than Seoul.

Kim: Seoul has yet to build anything, and there are many old houses. Houses meant for 800,000 but are inhabited by 2 million. The housing supply has yet to be increased and water is scarce. Pyongyang has a lot of anthracite and we are preparing to produce gas.

Kang Sheng: It looks like there is coal and metal.

Kim: There wasn't anything in the past.

Deng: It's good that there wasn't anything, now you are developing very well

Kim: Demobilized soldiers did much of the work. They have tremendous vigor and are very receptive to new things. The students in our schools work at the factories or serve in the army for three years after they graduate from high school before going to university. That's very good, doing honest work. We mobilize the university students if there's anything, such as transplanting rice seedlings.

Kang: Our experiences show that it affects their schoolwork if we mobilize them too much. The education ministry and the municipal party committees are in conflict

Kim: It's the same for us, now we cap it at 40 days. It was decided this year.

Deng: The year before last, they only had classes for five to six months, some even less. It's too little.

Kim: The rainy season is almost over.

Deng: It's good that it's not raining now, you can harvest more. We don't have much to do.

Kim: You can visit various places.

Deng: We can go to Panmunjom and Heartbreak Ridge to take a look.

Kim: It's convenient to go to Shangganling [Triangle Hill] from Wonsan.

Deng: We can forgo the visit if it's inconvenient. Don't go to too much trouble.

Kim: Shangganling is too close to the enemy, you can skip that. You can go to Mount Kumgang, it's a good time to do so.

Deng: We're always troubling you when we are here.

Kim: We welcome you to stay for a few more days. The meeting will go on for eight days and break on Sunday. It will be nine days including Sunday. You are free to participate or not participate during the seven days of meetings. There will be a rest day after the meeting, and a banquet. There's a mass rally on the 21st, we invite you to give a speech as a gesture of encouragement. After the meeting, you'll go to Wonsan and then to Mount Kumgan, then back to Wonsan again to visit Hamhung.

Deng: We can find a day during the meeting to go to Panmunjom and then visit the vinalon and the underground factories. We can't possible visit more.

Kim: That will do. The underground factories are not utilizing any maintenance fees and are not being repaired. The underground mineral processing plants are particularly frugal.

Deng: Your underground factories are very famous in our country. These are also results of being forced by circumstances.

Kang: It also conserves land.

Kim: We have dozens of underground factories. The workers are used to working underground, and they light sun lamps. Now everyone knows how to dig.

Deng: Your people are the best at digging. The costs may be higher at the beginning.

Kim: It's nothing much. The workers say they are not afraid when war comes.

Deng: The terrain is excellent. The United States chose this unlucky place. Well, you'll be giving the report tomorrow, and will be too busy. There won't be that many courtesies when you visit us. My speech is 20 minutes long.

Kim: Please feel free to do as you wish.

Kang: There are many fraternal parties that want to speak. It's best not to make it too long.

Deng: An agreement may not be reached at the Geneva Conference. Nehru embarrassed himself at the Conference of Non-Aligned Countries. He sang a different tune from Sukarno. Aidit had also attended the conference.

Kim: South Korea is running a military dictatorship. Song Yo Chan is proposing to have Park Chung Hee as the leader. It takes two years to rebuild the committee. Park Chung Hee wants to send someone to meet me.

Deng: That's good.

Kim: Afraid of letting people know and don't know what's going on.

Deng: It's a good thing anyway.

Kim: It seems like he is not getting the support of the masses and he can reduce domestic pressure and stabilize his regime by engaging us. The Americans are not supporting him either, thus he has to find another way. This is looking at things from a positive point of view. Recently the South Korean broadcasts have not been making personal attacks and giving more explanations. They don't wear American clothing, smoke American cigarettes or drink coffee. They call this a renaissance.

Deng: Their situation is like that of the United States', they want it yet wish to suppress it.

Kim: The people have a very hard life, and many more people are unemployed as compared to the past. The currency has inflated by a lot and commodity prices have been skyrocketing. Life is hard.

Deng: The whole thing unfolded in a very strange way.

Kim: Three people at the Minju ilbo have been sentenced to death. Koreans residing in Japan started the movement. This was followed by our protests and the sentence has yet to be carried out.

Kang: Not our people I presume.

Kim: People who are sympathetic to our cause and a few academics who advocated peaceful reunification were arrested and sentenced. There were more than 1700 [teachers' college] students in Seoul who were engaged in the struggle. One was arrested and the masses were silent.

Deng: An article in the Hong Kong Times mentioned China more than 60 times. Only in one instance did it denounce China. They seldom denounce us these days.

Kim: After talking to Chairman Mao, we only criticized when we returned and did not denounce

Deng: The United States is indeed having a difficult time. The Geneva issue needs to be resolved urgently. It had also stirred up the incident in Brazil and things look unfavorable as well. The military staged a coup but it was unsuccessful.

Kang: How many troops are there in [North] Korea?

Kim Chang-man: 700,000.

Deng: Japan is very dangerous. The United States wants to use Japan as a proxy. Japan is very arrogant. The problem still lies with Germany and Japan, their populations are growing quickly and looking for a way out. The direct targets are Japan and the United States. India is only making noise, the Himalayas are not the battleground.

Kim: We must pay attention to Japan, but it must know that the Asia of today is not the Asia of the past.

Deng: All the fraternal parties will be meeting tomorrow.

Kim: There is a one-hour difference between Pyongyang and Beijing.

Deng: Montgomery is going to China again, and his motive is to sow discord between China and the Soviet Union. He's always looking to make an issue out of this. He has three principles: 1) One China. 2) Two Germanys 3) To withdraw troops stationed in foreign countries.

Kang: It also reflects the contradictions between Britain and the United States.

Kim: The Comrade Ambassador has yet to travel around.

Hao Deqing: It's been a pleasure to be here.

Kang: He's signed the Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance between China and North Korea after coming here for one month.

Break and lunch together.