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Record of Conversation from Premier Zhou Enlai’s Reception of Korea-China Friendship Association Delegation

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Summary:

Zhou Enlai and a North Korean delegation discuss the health of Kim Il Sung and the situation of agricultural and cultural work in the DPRK.

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Chinese

Contents:

Translation - English

Committee for Foreign Cultural Relations [CFCR] Document
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Record of Conversation from Premier Zhou Enlai's Reception of Korea-China Friendship Association Delegation
(Premier has yet to review and approve)

Time: Afternoon, 30 September 1962
Place: Great Hall of the People
Foreign guests: Choe Chang-seok [Choe Chang-sok], Delegation Leader; Kim Seok-hyeong [Kim Sok-hyong], Kim Hyon-suk, Kim Sang-jun, An Nam-san, Chon Tong-san, Delegation Members; Ambassador Han Ik-su
Accompanying persons: Li Dequan, Zhang Zhixiang, Zhang Yingwu, Ouyang Jing
Interpreter: Han Chang-xi
Recording officials: Miao Qun, Chen Guozhong

Premier Zhou Enlai (hereafter abbreviated Zhou): Is this your first time to come here?

Delegation Leader Choe Chang-seok (hereafter abbreviated Choe): It's my first time.

Comrade Zhang Zhixiang (hereafter abbreviated Zhang): Comrade Kim Sang-jun came. He is deputy bureau director for the Korean Committee for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries.

Zhou: Do you understand Chinese?

Choe: I do not.

Zhou: Can you understand it a bit when you hear it?

Choe: I don't understand Chinese when spoken but can read it a bit.

Zhang: He was a student with Comrade Qian Xinzhong in the Soviet Union.

Zhou: Have you seen Qian Xinzhong?

Comrade Li Dequan: Qian Xinzhong met them at the airport.

Zhou: Then you can speak Russian [translator's note: uses the Russian term "порусски" (po-russki), mistakenly rendered in the document as "NO-PYCCKN"].

Who is she (pointing to an actress)?

Zhang: She is a film actress.

Zhou: In which films has she acted?

Kim Sang-jun: She acted in "Sunflower."

Zhou: Ah, I know the name of the movie!

Kim Sang-jun: She played the female lead in the film "Sunflower."

Zhou: Korea's public healthcare is developing quickly, so Premier Kim's operation went very well. We were very worried at first but later head that the result was very good. How was the Comrade Premier's health when you left?

Choe: He has completely recovered.

Zhou: I see from the newspapers that he has gone out on inspection. I am afraid that he has recently grown a bit thin.

Choe: He has lost six kilograms.

Zhou: I am afraid that once one has grown fat, losing weight is not easy. How long will you be here?

Zhang: Until 20 October.

Choe: We are visiting China for two to three weeks.

Zhou: Good! Go look all around, and please let us know if you need anything.

Choe: The comrade leaders of China's Party have been very concerned for Premier Kim's health, sending excellent doctors. This medical treatment has shown that Chinese comrades have given aid as if to their own flesh and blood.

Zhou: As we should. There has been decades of trials and tribulations, revolutionary friendship, and fraternal relations. Having come here, you can see the friendship of the Chinese people for the Korean people.

I will have Qian Xinzhong go with you. Minister Li has said herself that her health is very good, but I am here to reveal to you that she is in poor health, having undergone surgery to remove her gallbladder. She is two years older than me. I recognize having grown old, but she does not. You (speaking to Li) are too enthusiastic and do not listen to me.

Li: I hear what you are saying. Tell me to fight US imperialism, and I'll go forth right away!

Zhou: Why did you not ask a film actor to accompany them?

Zhang: I asked Xie Fang. She welcomed them yesterday.

Zhou: Xie Fang has acted in only one film.

Zhang: She is now shooting another one. I was originally going to ask Yu Lan, but she is sick.

Zhou: You (to the actress) have acted in how many films?

Kim: Twenty films.

Zhou: The movies we have made have many old actors whose health in general is not so good. In Shanghai, there are actors who are a bit healthier. Did you all visit Qin Wen?

Zhang: Qin Wen is in Shanghai.

Zhou: Qin Yi is in Shanghai.

Zhang: Ah!

Zhou: What is this gentleman's name?

Zhang: His name is Kim Sok-hyong. He is chairman of the Social Sciences Division, Korean Academy of Sciences, and an historian. He is very familiar with Comrade Liu Daosheng.

Zhou: Has there been something written on Korean history?

Kim: Yes.

Zhou: Written starting from antiquity?

Kim: From the ancient to the modern era.

Zhou: In ancient times, you Koreans spent time in the Liaohe River Basin!

Kim: There are two theories. One is that Korea's center was in the Liaohe River Basin, and the other that it was near Pyongyang.

Zhou: First you must solve the origin of the Korean race.

Kim: We have not yet reached a final conclusion but have taken initial steps towards solving it.

Zhou: How do you explain the initial view?

Kim: The initial theory is that, according to Chinese ancient documents, Korea's ancestors are the …. [original transcript indicates recorder did not understand this part of the explanation] Han. Solving this problem in the future will depend on archaeological discoveries in China's Northeast.

Zhou: You Koreans can come conduct archaeological studies□Yanji in the northeast, Mudanjiang, and in particular the Jingpo Lake region have many Korean historic sites.

Kim: The upper reaches and the middle of the Liaohe both have some historic sites.

Zhou: That could be. You Koreans could conduct some research with our historians and archaeologists. I have another view, although I do not have any historical basis for it. From the viewpoint of Korean pronunciation, customs, and habits of production, it seems a bit as though Koreans came from the Southern Seas. Premier Kim agrees with my view of it. Your pronunciation and our Northeast pronunciation are not at all a single system. Yours is closer to Guangdong, the southeast coast, and Southeast Asia.

When Premier Kim saw Cantonese Opera in Guangdong, he discovered that the pronunciation of many Korean words was close to that of Guangdong sounds.

Kim: Is this Chinese?

Zhou: It is Chinese. This is one basis. Another basis is that of living habits. Taking off your shoes, taking off your socks, planting rice paddies, and other such habits resemble those in Indonesia and elsewhere in Southeast Asia. China's Northeast does not have such customs. These could be from ancient times, perhaps later coming later to the Liaohe River area and then assimilating.

Kim: Korea also has this kind of theory.

Zhou: There is no basis for what I am saying. It is all nonsense. Who is this gentleman?

Zhang: He is Kim Sang-jun, deputy bureau director of the Korean Committee for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries. He is my counterpart in Korea. The last time we went to Korea, he hosted us and did so very well.

Zhou: I thank you for hosting our delegation well.

Kim Sang-jun: We have been lacking as hosts.

Zhou: I have been to Korea, so I can attest to it. [Korea's fine hospitality]

Who is he?

Ouyang Jing: He is a guidance official of the Workers Party of Korea Central Committee.

Zhou: Does he often go out?

An: He often goes out.

Zhou: Is your agricultural situation this year good?

An: We can accomplish the food production goal that the Center has specified.

Zhou: In your Six Goals, you have already made a breakthrough in one of them. It is a great harvest.

An: If we do not run into any natural disasters this year, we can over-fulfill the quota. Yesterday we saw the communique of the 10th Plenary Session of the Eighth Central Committee of the Communist Party of China. China's agricultural situation is better this year than last. The Korean people are very happy.

Zhou: The consumption level of the Chinese people is lower than yours. Your five million tons of grain are our 100 billion jin [Chinese unit of weight]. Does Korea have 10 million people?

Ambassador Han: Twelve million people.

Zhou: On average, that is over 800 jin per person, an average level of consumption per capita much higher than ours. We congratulate you.

An: And we congratulate you.

Zhou: Thank you.

At this time the Premier stood up and said, "All right, you all stay longer and go see some more.

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