

April 18, 1964

**Memorandum of Conversation between Premier
Zhou Enlai and the Korean Cultural Delegation**

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Summary:

Conversation between Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai and North Korean official of cultural delegation. Criticizing the Soviet revisionism and discussing a joint movie project with North Korea.

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Committee for Foreign Cultural Relations Document

Record of Conversation between Premier Zhou Enlai and the Korean Cultural Delegation

(The Premier has yet to check and approve.)

Date: 18 April 1964

Place: Xihua Hall, State Council

Accompanying persons: Cao Ying, Zhang Yingwu

Charge d'Affaires ad interim Jeong Bong-gyu [Chong Pong-gyu]

Interpreter: Jiang Chunyi

Recorder: Liu Hongxiang

Premier: You are late in returning (indicating from elsewhere to Beijing) by how many days? Originally you were going to return on the 12th or 13th, right?

Kang Ku-yeong [Kang Ku-yong] (hereafter abbreviated as Kang): We were a few days late in returning. We came back to Beijing on the 15th.

Premier: How many days all together did you spend out there?

Kang: It was something like 8 or 9 days.

Premier: You went to which areas?

Kang: We went to Hainan Island, Guangzhou, Hangzhou, and Shanghai.

Premier: You did not go to Wuhan?

Cao Ying: We did not go to Wuhan.

Kang: How is the Comrade Premier's health?

Premier: Very good. How are Premier Kim and Chairman Choe [Yong-geon, Yong-gon]?

Kang: They are both very good. Just before leaving to come here, Premier Kim made a point of telling me to give his regards to the Premier.

Premier: I thank him.

Kang: We have learned many things this time in coming to China.

Premier: You came to make a tour. What did you learn?

Kang: Even though time was very short on this visit, we certainly saw and learned many things.

Premier: What things did you see?

Kang: We toured a people's commune in Guangzhou, and on Hainan Island we visited the Xinglong farm.

Premier: That is something that the Overseas Chinese Affairs Office started. It produces very good coffee. I went there once (to Zhang Yingwu: Have you gone there? Zhang: I have not gone there.).

Kang: The rubber trees grow very well there.

Premier: Was or was there not grass in the rubber plantation? Was it hoed clean?

Kang: We saw it. It was very cleanly hoed.

Premier: Have they started the tapping the rubber trees yet? Now is the time that they tap the rubber trees.

Kang: I saw rubber for the first time. Usually I would not know about this kind of thing. But as far as I can see, the rubber trees there are growing very well. According to the introduction from the comrades, in another two to three or three to four years they will be able to tap a great amount of sap.

Premier: Some of the rubber trees on the Xinglong farm are old, already seven or eight years old, perhaps. There are also some new ones there. One has to take care to protect them. This kind of tree is very delicate. The grass must be hoed clean, particularly the lemon-grass, because it can absorb the fertilizer from the soil, or the tree is going to wither and die. When it is time to clear an area for cultivation, one cannot do so roughly. For example, in using a tractor one will not take care of the roots cleanly, or the grass. The trees will then be unable to grow well and could even wither and die. We had no experience in the past with making rubber. As for the material, at the start the Soviet Union wanted to cooperate with us (which was kind of them) and help us make the rubber. They then sent us some experts. They did not understand what they were doing, made arbitrary suggestions, put in some machinery, without any good result, doing it the wrong way. Later, overseas Chinese from Asian countries to the south, where they produce rubber, such as Indonesia and Malaya, returned to China. Understanding the basis for planting rubber trees, they managed to do it. In 1958-1959, however, some comrades in the Ministry of Agriculture and Land Reclamation took a subjective view of the matter, wanted to proceed quickly, were not methodical, and advocated large-scale clearing of the land for cultivation. The result was that land in the western part of Hainan Island was cleared on a large scale. Too much land was cleared. But the land was not deeply cleared, so tree roots remained in the ground. The result was that the transplanted saplings were affected by the old roots and could not grow. The large-scale clearing of land for cultivation resulted in removing trees that could have served as a windbreak. When typhoons came, the delicate trees could not stand. Much land was cleared and many trees were planted, but their survival rate was low. In the final tally, part of it was written off, requiring us to do it over again. You can see that wanting to do a great deal resulted, on the contrary, in not accomplishing much. Perhaps the reason that the Xinglong farm that you saw is better is that this farm was established a little earlier, the overseas Chinese also had experience, there were windbreaks, and they protected the rubber trees well. At present we have planted rubber trees on the mainland, across from Hainan Island, in the Zhanjiang area. The current total area is around 200,000 to 300,000 chongbo (You use the chongbo as your domestic unit of measurement, right? One chongbo is equal to 15 mu.). Previously they wanted to go too quickly, wanting to do 600,000 chongbo. This is not such an easy thing to do. How to plant the trees, the manpower, the saplings, etc., are all problems. So, from the start in 1951 until the present time, it has already taken 13 years to do it.

The growth of something new is not smooth sailing. One always has to feel one's way slowly, repeating things many times, experimenting many times, and finally finding a better way to do it. Speaking of that, the great mistake we made two times both came from good intentions. The first time was when Stalin was still alive. We wanted to make rubber, so avoiding buying it from capitalist countries. This came from good intention. But we had no experience. Where were the Soviet Union's rubber trees? There were none. The experts pretended to know what they did not know. It was subjectivism. The second time, we ourselves wanted to do a great deal. The second time it was us ourselves. We wanted to do a great deal. It was comrades of the Ministry of Agriculture and Land Reclamation who did it. There was subjectivism. Once the activity was under way, there was also commandism. They wanted much, but the result was not much.

We learned a lesson from this: Treat new things always as going from the unknown to the known. Thus, in putting something into practice, one must take care to feel one's way and take care to tally one's experiences. It is not possible not to make mistakes, but the numbers of errors committed are different. Take care, and the errors will be smaller. If not, they will be greater. One must ceaselessly sum up both the correct and the incorrect. One must do so over and over again. Only then can one produce a relatively fruitful method. Anything new has this problem. One must take a welcoming attitude regarding new things. Regarding conditions for producing new things, first of all one must welcome them. Do not be afraid to make mistakes; be afraid not to do them. Seek out experience; then it will be possible not to make mistakes. This is probably a more appropriate attitude. Other than that, there are two attitudes that are not worth adopting. One is, upon encountering some difficulty, to grow discouraged and negative, and cease wanting to do something. This is an error of the Right. It is conservative thinking. Another is not to admit one's error, to insist on doing things one's way, the errors growing larger the more one makes them, in result affecting the new things, which do not develop. This is an error of the Left. It, too, is not worth adopting.

Of course, this is an error of the Left or Right. It is part of the contradictory nature of the party and the people. Contemporary revisionism is not like this. They are a complete mess and come with ulterior motives. One example is that of [Nikita] Khrushchev's method in regard to Cuba. It is to ask that Cuba produce more sugar cane and less food. His reasoning is this: The market price for sugar is high, there is more sugar produced, and money is spent to purchase food. In fact, Khrushchev's way with regard to Cuba is a continuation of the past method of US imperialism's economic monoculture, turning Cuba into a supply base for sugar, providing the Soviet Union with sugar to eat. Colonialism with regard to Latin America has thus adopted such a way! They tell people where to plant coffee, where to plant sugar, where to plant cocoa, where to raise livestock. They specialize entirely in agriculture in the service of the United States, which industrializes, making every country of Latin America depend on the industrialization of the United States. Europe's old colonialists, too, are like this with regard to Africa and Asia. The Soviet Union's Khrushchev, too, at present is of the same attitude, having Cuba specialize in sugar, Bulgaria specialize in fruit, and Romania specialize in grain crops and animal feed. Now, if there is not enough food, then what is to be done? He says that he can supply it. But you know that Soviet agriculture was made chaotic by Khrushchev. This is not some kind of conservatism. It is really and truly an ideology of acting blindly. Simply, it is blindly making a mess of things. The Soviet Union from last year to this year has imported 13 million to 14 million tons of food, and it still continues importing. How can it supply food to these countries? Because of this, Cuba increases sugar production, but the production of food decreases. Cuba does not have food; the Soviet Union cannot supply it. It would be better to buy it from us. In addition, there is also food to buy on international markets. We have bought Cuban sugar and sold food to them, but we cannot but tell them: You still have to grow your own food to avoid buying food from afar. If not, once something happens it will be very dangerous. The Soviet Union buys Cuba's sugar and gives Cuba what? Machinery. It is necessary for Cuba to use machinery to grow sugar cane, and not only for cultivation,

but machinery is used even for harvesting. The Soviet Union does not grow sugar cane, so where does it have such experience? It is said that mechanized harvesting is very problematic. The machinery is so large and so cumbersome, and the sugar cane is so tall. The machinery cannot but move forward, resulting in much thrown away.

At present the Soviet Union's steel production is very high, but the machinery produced from it has no sales market. The West does not buy it, and our trade volume has also dropped. There is nothing to be done about it. The result is a flood of production to export, which brings misfortune to others! A Romanian delegation came to China and said that they do not want to buy the Soviet Union's machinery, and that the West's machinery is inexpensive, modernized, highly productive, and able to save manpower. The Soviet Union's machinery is cumbersome, backward, and expensive. East Germany, because West Germany would not supply machine parts, had no choice but to buy from the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union wants East Germany to change the machinery into the Soviet type: cumbersome and backward. East Germany does not want to change and still imports from the West. The Czechs are even more reluctant to use Soviet machinery. They long ago entered into business transactions with the West. As for Cuba, because there is a great deal of sugar on the international market, its price is low. At the same time, Cuba also suffers under the US blockade and has no choice but to buy from other countries. It has to import machinery from the Soviet Union. Of course, there are some things that they need, such as oil. Therefore, with economic monoculture Cuba not only depends on the Soviet Union for industry but must also depend on the entire world for food. This is extraordinarily dangerous. Once trouble occurs, such as the United States carrying out a total blockade or causing disturbances, one would run into many difficulties to staying the course, not a reduction in difficulties. This is entirely not the attitude of fraternal countries, of socialist countries. It is entirely that of colonialism! That is to say, contemporary revisionism is leading to the restoration of capitalism in its own country; towards the capitalist developed nations, its adopted policy is one of social democracy; towards the Asian, African, and Latin American countries that are newly independent or not yet independent, it adopts neocolonialist policy.

I have just spoken of an error with two natures. One kind is that of popular internal contradiction in nature. In approaching new things, one will at times commit errors of the Right and at times commit errors of the Left. In these instances, both errors can be corrected. In their nature, they are internal to the Party and the people. The second part to discuss is the contradictory nature between the enemy and ourselves, which is no longer something internal to the people. But the present method of resolution is not for dealing with contradiction among the people, because the problem is very complicated. The absolute majority of the people in the country led by the party of contemporary revisionism is revolutionary and socialist. So, at the time of Khrushchev's birthday, he had to issue a telegram. You all saw it. (Kang: We saw it.) In the telegram there was talk of major events, of future prospects, of friendship between peoples. This is what was said to their party members and people. I do not know whether he published it or not. Possibly he understood and did not publish it. I have heard that at present it still has not been published. But if you do not publish it, we can broadcast it. Some people who would be able to hear it.

I have talked about error of two natures, and started the talk from rubber. I am sorry for talking so much. China has a saying: "Seize on an issue to beat one's own drum." In brief, one can see the problem of error of two natures. A country led by a Marxist-Leninist party is also capable of committing error. But it does so with good intentions, or it is an error of the people's internal nature. Now, contemporary revisionism in paying lip service to supposedly helping others commits not a common error, but one that harms others and is contrary to internationalism. There is another point. We say that aid is always mutual and has always been this way. But contemporary revisionism believes that everything is its helping others. For example, [Mikhail] Suslov's report spoke at great length on aid to China. He simply did not understand to what extent it helped. Also, learning has always been mutual. Each side has its strengths and weaknesses. One must remove one's own weaknesses and

learn from the strengths of others. However, contemporary revisionism has never learned from the good experience of fraternal countries but has always wanted others to learn from it. At present it wants to learn capitalist methods. It really admires and tries to imitate capitalism. The United States and Britain are thus quite pleased, saying that Khrushchev is very intelligent in adopting the capitalist method and confirming that the socialist method failed.

Britain's prime minister has also said the following: These days, the division of the world into East and the West is past. It should be divided into North and South. Those in the North are all advanced, civilized countries, and all are white, namely, Britain, the United States, Germany, the Soviet Union, Canada, and so on. Here, he intentionally excluded France. It is not yet decided whether to include France or not. He said: The South is all uncivilized countries, undeveloped in industry and backwards, and all are colored. That is to say that the Arab world, Africa, Asia, and Latin America are all together considered the South. All are regarded as backwards and uncivilized. This is the height of absurdity! In fact, this is Western imperialism promoting racism and implementing a policy of racial discrimination. But what he said also has a flaw: Are not the rulers of South Africa, as well as those of such countries as Australia and New Zealand, all in the South? And are they all not white people? Thus imperialism, in order to draw in the Soviet Union, will use anything and has put forth ill-founded things.

Well, I have gone on for some time and said a great many things. In addition, taking advantage of this opportunity, there is something that I would like to ask of you.

We have helped you do some projects. I do not know whether or not there has been subjectivism. I do not know whether there have been or not things not suited to your needs, including in the area of cultural cooperation. Please look into it. Commonly in cooperation we have subjectivism, things not suiting needs, a conservative or irritated tone. Taking things that have not yet matured, that one has still not done well oneself, one forces them upon others. Machinery and equipment that do not conform to the norm are sent. I hope that you can tell me what you know. If you do not really understand, go back and look into it. You must investigate it. After that, it would be fine if inform me directly or inform our ambassador or cultural counsellor. This would be a great help to us. One cannot see entirely clearly regarding one's own actions. It is always easy to see their good side. In regard to the incorrect aspect, one often overlooks it or is unwilling to look at it. One must help others.

Kang: As far as I know, we have not discovered such things. In respect to culture, we, the Comrade Counsellor, and China's Committee for Foreign Cultural Relations are working well together. Henceforth, we will act in accordance with what the Comrade Premier has said.

Premier: You perhaps have not yet taken note of the problem, so you have yet to discover it. I now request that you inform the chairman of your Committee for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries and the Minister of Culture. In the area of cultural cooperation, once you discover our error, let us know.

This will make us good comrades and good friends. At present you, and your two delegation comrades as well, if you become aware of something, let me know. That would be even better.

Kang: In this regard, I have not discovered or felt anything. We felt sorry, in fact, for frequently needing the help of the China Committee for Foreign Cultural Relations, making many requests, and being a burden.

Premier: What are you saying? Is there something for which you should feel sorry?

You have the right to ask, because you are at the forefront, face-to-face with US imperialism. In working, a great deal must be put into the fight against the enemy. Therefore, in respect to culture, for a time it is also possible that we will do little. There are limits. China, this great power, is also in the rear. We must help you, and you have the right to ask. We have the duty to supply you with every kind of material.

You are doing very good work! Last year at the 1st Games of the New Emerging Forces, held in Jakarta, the song and dance troupe that you sent was outstanding. Last year, on the fifteenth anniversary of the founding of your Republic, you put on an art exhibition of over 3,000 persons. There were over 30,000 persons at the same time who participated in the mass games performance. It was truly a magnificent scene. Therefore, of the Chinese comrades who have been to Korea, there has not been a single one who has not praised it. I have only seen a film clip of it, which was extraordinarily grand, magnificent, and extraordinarily militant. This year is the fifteenth anniversary of our country's founding. I can tell you that we fundamentally have nothing like that, cannot imagine it, and cannot produce it. Although we have lofty aspirations and high aims, we cannot realize it. Is or is there not a venue for it? There is. The Great Hall of the People's stage can accommodate at least 2,000 persons, the Banquet Hall can accommodate at least 3,000 persons, and the [Workers'] Stadium can accommodate 30,000. But organizing such a performance of song and dance, from the composers to the performers, the singing and the dancing, we are not capable of it. Why is it that you can do it? We have to examine this. This is your country, in a combat environment, face-to-face with the enemy, the Party and state with a single call, the masses responding with extraordinary speed, resolute in their will, with great organization and discipline. This is your character. You can gather together in a moment. Of course, the lines of communication are short and easy, but this is not the main point. We want to perform with three or five thousand persons. As for the numbers, we can gather them together, but they would not be at the same level. Even the sound would not be the same. There would be a mix of northern and southern accents, which would not sound good. In dance there is every kind. There is the purely regional in color, the classical, the Western, the neither local nor Western, everything. Doing it all together, it is ugly. (Cao: Our costumes, too, are ugly. There is no unity in our costumes.) I am not talking here about appearance. If I were to talk about appearance, there is no unity in costume and it is ugly. What I have said is no more than form. The content of the thinking, too, is uneven. Of course, for the form the composer or director makes it uniform but cannot imagine the movement that concentrated and united or the will that strong. They come from every corner of China, with different levels of understanding and different degrees of accepting the Party's policies. As we can see, the matter appears to be easy, but in reality it is not that easy!

Kang: What we did last year also had many faults. We think that if the Chinese comrades had done it, they would have been better than us.

Premier: It is not that we lack lofty aspirations and high aims, but in thinking a bit about it, this matter is not so easy.

Do you have to return to Korea the day after tomorrow?

Kang: Yes. This time, to tell the truth, we really learned many things.

Premier: There are areas, such as medical matters, where one can still study, but analysis is also necessary. Of course, one can also draw lessons from one's faults. We have made mistakes. You perhaps have not made them.

Kang: On this trip to China, since Deputy Director Cao Ying and Department Director Zhang Yingwu have taken great care of us and have attentively arranged everything, we feel as though we were in our own house.

Premier: It should seem as though one were in one's own house, what one calls "generations-long friendship between two families," where the two families are as one.

Kang: Every place we went, Chinese comrades all warmly received us. Through this, we deeply understood how profound is the friendship of the Chinese people for the Korean people.

Premier: In this respect, the people of our two countries respect and are friendly to one another. Which of you delegation members manages film? (None of them manages film. One is a musician; another is a section chief in the Korean Committee for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries.) Not long ago our people wanted to go to Korea and film "Red Propagandist." They went there very quickly. I hope that you relay to your Committee for Foreign Cultural Relations chairman, culture minister, and government (I believe that you will make it convenient for them.) that, while they are there working, to tell them directly of any shortcoming, such as in shooting scenes or filming, as with a brother, you must tell them to their face of any shortcomings. In any case, as foreigners there will be much that they will not understand. I ask the comrades of the Korean Committee for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries, the Culture Ministry, and those managing film to give a great deal of guidance and not be formal. We hope, through the images of the Chinese comrades, to introduce to the Chinese people the building of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the Cheollima [Chollima] Movement, and the Cheongsan-ri [Chongsan-ri] Spirit. This is a joint matter, so I hope that you will tell us.

I have already spoken with Chairman Choe, Vice Chairman Ri Hyo-sun, and Foreign Minister Pak of our two countries shooting a film together. It seems that we may have to go next year (the only film this year is "Red Propagandist"), because it is now already April, and we still do not have a script. As for the script, if the Korean comrades can write it, we would very much welcome it. This film would best be written on the War of Resistance against Japan, because our two countries' comrades all took part in it. Perhaps Chinese comrades would play Chinese and Korean comrades would play Koreans. Together in one film, they would show that the concerted action in the revolutionary struggle of that time. Please return and inform Premier Kim of my thinking on this.

Kang: I will certainly inform him.

Premier: I think that the Korean comrades certainly will write the script, because many Korean comrades joined the Anti-Japanese United Army. I expounded to Chairman Choe on the Anti-Japanese United Army that it was a united anti-Japanese army of Korean and Chinese comrades. Not a few Korean comrades, under the leadership of Premier Kim, joined the Anti-Japanese United Army. Among them will be persons to write a good script. (to our accompanying persons: Have we not put on a Korean drama? Which one is it? Zhang Yingwu: It was the play "Red Flag," which we put on last year.)

Kang: Here we are relying on Northeast Anti-Japanese United Army veterans to search and gather materials, but we still have not gathered some of them. I am afraid that we will have to rely on the Chinese comrades.

Premier: You can send some someone here. However, we here no longer have many men left from the Northeast Anti-Japanese United Army. You know that Comrade Zhou Baozhong passed away not long ago. Of course, some still remain, such as Comrade Feng Zhongyun and Comrade Li Yanlu, but they are not many.

Kang: Comrade Premier, as busy as you are, you have spent so much of your valuable

time speaking with us on so many and such important matters. We are very grateful.

Premier: I spoke as I pleased, seizing on an issue to beat one's own drum.

Kang: On my return I will certainly report what the Premier has said.

Premier: Next time you come you have to tell me where our work is lacking. It will not do if you do not say anything. If you do not come, then when other comrades come they have to tell me. If I see them, I will have to ask them.

Kang: I will certainly strive to do so.

Premier: Thank you, we have made an appointment for the next meeting.

Kang: I wish Comrade Premier good health.

Premier: When you return, please give my regards to Premier Kim Il Sung, Chairman Choe Yong-geon, and other leading comrades of Korea's party and government.

Kang: I will certainly convey them.

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