

New
Life
in the
Homeland

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PUBLISHER'S NOTE

FIVE years have elapsed since the repatriation of Koreans in Japan started in December 1959.

About 600,000 Koreans still live in Japan. Under Japanese imperialist rule, they left their native places to seek a living in Japan. And millions of Koreans had been drafted to work in Japan. Hard-pressed life and humiliation were their lot.

When Japan was defeated in World War II, they wished to return home and lead a happy life in the liberated homeland.

But the Japanese government under the instigations of Washington denied their due right and blocked their homecoming. The Workers' Party of Korea and the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea did all in their power to realize the aspiration of our compatriots. At last, the repatriation agreement was signed at Calcutta, India, in August 1959.

Thus, a historic "movement of race from capitalism to socialism," as a Western press put it, began. More than 80,000 Koreans have already returned to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Most of them are natives of South Korea. But they refused to go to the U.S.-occupied South Korea where unem-

ployment and hunger prevail. The repatriation is still going on.

All the repatriates have been given jobs according to their wishes and talents. They lead a happy life in their homeland without worrying about their future.

This book will give the readers a glimpse of the life of the repatriates.

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Back in My Country

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HOME-COMING

AS Japan was in the grip of influenza in 1961, the boats from our country for us repatriating Koreans postponed sailing for the time being, compelling us to spend more than 70 days at the Japanese Red Cross centre in Niigata.

It was early February when we came to Niigata from Tokyo and we found the city still under a blanket of snow. In mid-April boats came from the homeland for us. In that city of the northern district of Japan, cherry blossoms were still in full bloom when we said good-bye to it.

We were the 55th batch of repatriates.

The sea was calm. A man from the reception centre who was dining with us on board remarked: "Perhaps the sea has not been more calm—the

soup doesn't stir on the table. When the sea rages, the soup spills out."

Notwithstanding, not a few people got seasick. But I and my eldest daughter relished our food at each meal. The tea and soup from our own country seemed to have a special flavour.

It had been a long time since I had made a trip by boat. I recalled my school days in Japan. While a student in high school and university in Japan where I studied after finishing the middle school course in Seoul, Korea, I would go back and forth between Pusan and Shimonoseki when going home during vacations and returning to school. In those days Korean students were discriminated against and subjected to strict examination by the Japanese authorities. I had a strong desire for learning and I was urged by my parents, particularly by my aged father to continue the study. This was what happened many years ago. Now on the way to my homeland I was immensely happy, because there was no one looking at us with contempt now. I wished my father who had spared no efforts for my education had been with us.

Early morning of April 16. The contour of the mountains of the homeland appeared on the far horizon filling us with happiness which I can hardly express in words. Those years of restrained life in the alien land, a life common to all other Korean nationals in Japan, were becoming a thing of the past. I felt an entirely different life had already begun when I saw the smoke rising from the stack of the Chung-

jin Steel Works. I got excited, looking forward to what lay before me.

The homeland was then seething with fervour on the eve of the completion of a vinalon factory, the biggest of its kind in the world. I had a chance of attending the ceremony at its completion and watching a big parade in honour of the occasion and May Day. These events left a deep impression on me. About a month passed in an entirely new environment before my second daughter was born. She is now just two years old. Her age will always tell us how long it has been since we returned to our glorious homeland.

VINALON FACTORY

There is a big vinalon factory in Bon-goong, South Hamgyung Province, which is the pride of our country. I suppose many people in Japan must have seen the pictures of the four tall stacks of the carbide plant also in Bon-goong towering into the sky.

Construction of the vinalon factory was undertaken from the revolutionary standpoint of securing the necessary raw materials, taking into full account the fibre resources at home, in accordance with the line adopted at a national scientists' conference in 1952. Those were very difficult days for the country, with its towns and villages razed to the ground by the savage bombing of the U.S. imperialists. A general line of carrying the war to victorious conclu-

sion and undertaking construction projects after the war was mapped out in those days. From the revolutionary optimism of looking forward to the future even in a difficult situation, a plan for the development of an independent chemical industry was worked out for a happy life tomorrow.

As for vinalon, an intermediate pilot plant with a daily capacity of 20 kg. succeeded in making trial products in 1956. In 1958 Premier Kim Il Sung, the beloved leader of the Korean people, while inspecting the intermediate pilot plant, personally instructed not to spare materials and money for research work and told people there to "work out daring plans and carry them out boldly."

The Premier also instructed that the factory must have an annual production capacity of 20,000-30,000 tons. In 1959 he visited the site chosen for the factory to direct the start of the "big battle for vinalon."

A call for "All-out efforts for the construction of a vinalon factory!" found its way to work places, schools and even to family circles. It met with enthusiastic response. The vinalon factory project proceeded at a rapid speed called vinalon speed. Ceremony for the completion of the factory was held on May 7, 1961 amid deafening cheers.

This memorable event took place some two weeks after my return home. A week prior to its completion, I visited the factory together with fellow repatriates at the Hamheung reception centre. At that time, there were still heaps of earth in the factory compound. But the compound was cleared of all this,

the ground was levelled and rows of electric poles with fluorescent lamps were erected, all in a week. I saw for myself the vinalon speed and realized how great the might of man was.

Premier Kim Il Sung and other leaders of the government, leaders of public organizations, visitors from abroad and journalists made the round of the factory. I had the honour of accompanying the group.

The vinalon factory is provided with the chemical equipment made at home according to the research by the Koreans. It has on its premises a carbide shop and all the incidental shops—activated carbon, polymerization, catalyzer and spinning.

The acetate vinyl monomer synthesis shop, for instance, has a capacity of nearly 20,000 tons and the capacity will increase from 20,000 to 30,000 tons in the near future when furnished with some additional equipment.

Dr. Ri Seung Gi wrote in the concluding part of his recollection of vinalon: "When in the future the succeeding generation ask you to tell the history of vinalon, tell them the history of the Workers' Party of Korea, instead of mentioning the names of the scientists and technicians, so that they can see how vinalon appeared in our age."

It is clear that the chemical industry in our country is not linked up with the feats and interests of a certain individual but with the Party and the people's welfare.

I work at the Heungnam Branch of the chemical

industry research institute of the Academy of Sciences. It had been located near the vinalon factory until we moved to our present building—Hamheung Branch of the Academy of Sciences. As soon as I was taken on I was given an opportunity of making the round of the factory. This proved to me how I was trusted in my country.

As a scientist, I studied in Japan, where I was given hardly any opportunity to visit any factory in the line of my research. Under capitalism where even persons in the same line of business guard the secrets of any information of production, it is not easy to inspect factories. For me, a foreign scientist, it was almost impossible to have a chance of visiting any factory in Japan.

The factory built in my country in the age of the Workers' Party welcomed me as a participant in the socialist construction in the Chullima era and helped me correct the deformity formed in my research while in Japan.

During a noon recess on the day of the completion of the factory, I was unexpectedly asked to come to the reception hall of the factory where I met Premier Kim Il Sung whom I was acquainted with only through pictures and newspapers in Japan. There were other leaders of the Party in the hall.

The Premier asked about my family. I gave him a plain answer and next expressed words of gratitude to him for sending a large educational fund to the Korean nationals in Japan.

The Premier in a serene mood said that it was the duty of the homeland to send educational funds to the compatriots in Japan, adding that more assistance would be given to them.

The Premier's voice was deep and full of affection. He then spoke of providing the scientists with conditions for promoting scientific and cultural intercourses with foreign countries. He touched upon several problems about the scientific research and then said with a smile: "For the scientists books are the most precious treasure."

I was impressed by the Premier's deep concern about scientific research. Now I knew what had made it possible to build the giant vinalon factory in such a short span of time. The Premier, I learned, saw to it that the scientists were provided with conditions for research work even in the air raid shelters when the land was enveloped in flames during the war. Such consideration served as the cornerstone for the giant factory.

The Premier showed concern about my health which was not so good at that time.

"Take good care of yourself so that you can do your bit and join the Chullima movement," the Premier told me.

I was deeply moved at the fact that the beloved Premier received me personally and showed great concern for me, an ordinary scientists. I renewed my determination to do my utmost to invent new fibres for the improvement of our people's living.

HIGH MOLECULE CHEMICAL RESEARCH INSTITUTE

The High Molecule Chemical Research Institute of the Hamheung Branch of the Academy of Sciences where I work, has a section dealing with synthetic fibres such as vinalon, nylon, nitron, vichron and fibres from vinyl chloride, a section dealing with vinyl chloride, phenol, cresylic resin and synthetic rubber and a section specializing in paints, insulating materials and synthetic treatment of resin and rubber, binding agent and plasticizer.

My research covers chiefly the study of property of matter for improvement of vinalon. Each section has its chief who leads the research work of its members. It is necessary for the research worker to have correct understanding of the Party's policies choosing the subject of his research. He must always be guided by the spirit of self-reliance and the consideration for bettering the people's welfare through the rational use of the domestic resources. The duty of the scientist in our country is to solve by creative efforts the urgent problems arising in the course of socialist construction, in conformity with the situation at home.

A conference is held twice a year to make public the results of research work and conduct discussion on them. The conference is very instructive. Everybody can ask questions and express his opinions as to whether the research work follows a correct line—whether proper methods are employed, whether the

calculation is accurate, whether the research has a profound theoretical ground and whether there is something to be corrected. In principle joint efforts of the scientists are enlisted, instead of resorting to the wisdom of the individual.

Acting upon the Premier Kim Il Sung's instructions at the second conference of the scientists and technicians in 1963 that the scientists should be more modest, study more, have a deeper knowledge of the basic theories and become versatile persons, a course on basic theory has been arranged twice a week for all laboratory men. Physics, chemistry, mathematics and chemical engineering are common subjects of study for all the laboratory men. Examinations are conducted, and laboratory men passing them become qualified for presenting paper for Bachelor's Degrees. Another important point is that research workers often visit the factories in their line of research in order to combine research with production. For instance, members of the vinalon section go to the vinalon factory, members of the paints and refractory materials section to the Yung-an and Haijoo chemical factories and members of the vinyl chloride section to the vinyl chloride factory. In this way, research workers also solve the problems raised at the factories, working hand in hand with the factory laboratories. In my research work for improving the quality of vinalon, I maintain ties with vinalon factory.

POLITICAL STUDY

Scientists and technicians likewise make it a rule to study Party's policies, Party's history, philosophy and economics. One has to pass examinations in these subjects to get a Bachelor's Degree.

Study of the Party's policies, for instance, is arranged in such a way as to enable everyone in work-shops and offices to comprehend, correctly and immediately, the concluding speeches Premier Kim Il Sung made at the Party Central Committee meetings. Ways of dealing with the problems confronting one can be found when one has correct comprehension of the Party's policies.

The development of science and the improvement of the people's welfare are unthinkable apart from the Party's policies.

For the scientist of the socialist country it is essential for carrying on proper research work to acquire theory on socialism through political study. It is arranged as a rule after working hours.

I have been able to systematize my knowledge which was fragmentary and go further in my study through the regular political study.

MEDICAL SERVICE

I often have a return of my old complaint of gastric ulcer. Now in the homeland, when an attack sets in, I am sent to the hospital. When I get some-

what better I go to a rest home or sanatorium. Last year I spent a month at the Songdan rest home and this year I had an opportunity of recuperating at the Jooeul sanatorium for one month. I take with me only a small sum of pocket money when going to the hospital and sanatorium.

While in Japan I suffered for many years from tuberculosis. I had been in hospital and sanatorium. The Union of Korean Students in Japan and the organization of the General Federation of the Koreans in Japan helped me, a man with no kith or kin to look after him in Japan, to escape death. It was all right when I was in good health, for I also had the sympathy of some of the broad-minded Japanese. But once I fell ill, I was more tormented by the thought of covering the expenses than by the disease itself. I did not want to count on others for meeting the expenses.

Here in my motherland, one has only to think about curing his disease when he falls ill. While I was in hospital, fellow workers often came to my home to see whether my family was having any difficulties. They would chop firewood and see that the family had no trouble while I was away from home.

From different parts of the country, people with different occupations and trades come to the rest homes and sanatoriums provided with recreation facilities. It is a joy to have chats with people having different experience in life. Railway men speak of railways and demobbed soldiers tell stories of batt-

les at the front.

There is no morose atmosphere in the sanatorium. The atmosphere is cheerful. Usually the inmates gain weight in a month, become sunburned and fit for resuming their work.

MY HOME

I lived in Bon-goong for one year and eight months before moving to the present dwelling in early December last year. My home stands on the mid-slope of a hillock covered with apple trees.

The site of the house was secured by cutting away some apple trees of the well-arranged orchard. I can admire the ripening apples outside the window at close hand.

Over the roof of the house hang drooping branches of the near-by apple tree. There are many birds in the orchard. For the first time in my life I hear the call of wild cuckoos. I can also enjoy the crying of pheasants and singing of nightingales. The air is fresh and scenery is lovely. About five minutes' walk takes me to my work place. A river flows not far away. More than 10 kilometers away stands the Bon-goong Carbide Factory, whose stacks emit whitish smoke all the year round. My house is one of those built for the scientists. It has three rooms—one with wooden-floor which serves as a drawing room, the other two are of traditional Korean style, provided with hypocaust. It is furnished with a