

***ON THE IDEOLOGICAL AND ARTISTIC CHARACTERISTICS OF THE
MASTERPIECE, THE FATE OF A SELF-DEFENCE CORPS MAN***

Answers to the Questions Raised by the Artists Producing the Film
Version of the Masterpiece, The Fate of a Self-defence Corps Man
February 14, 1970

A short time ago I received, through the Party organization of the Korean Film Studio, the questions you raised after reading the director's script for the film version of the masterpiece. The Fate of a Self-defence Corps Man.

I found that all your questions concerned the original. I think that a correct and profound understanding of the original is of tremendous significance for us in our future creative work.

Adapting masterpieces to the screen is a responsible and important undertaking to hand our Party's glorious tradition of revolutionary art and literature down to posterity. It is also worthwhile and honourable work to develop film art to a higher level by following the examples of masterpieces.

You have already produced the film version of the masterpiece The Sea of Blood and thus carried out in good faith the historic task you undertook before the Party and the people. The work of adapting classics to the cinema will continue in the future.

If you are to perform your current task with credit, you must first clearly understand the revolutionary tradition of art and literature in our country and the place The Fate of a Self-defence Corps Man occupies in this tradition, as well as the work's ideological and artistic characteristics.

**ANTI-JAPANESE REVOLUTIONARY ART AND LITERATURE
AND THE FATE OF A SELF-DEFENCE CORPS MAN**

The revolutionary tradition of art and literature in our country was formed in the crucible of the arduous and bloody anti-Japanese revolutionary struggle, fought under the banner of the great Juche idea, to liberate the country and bring freedom and emancipation to the people. To achieve our people's national independence and their class emancipation, the Korean communists needed both a standing revolutionary armed force and the powerful ideological weapon of revolutionary art and literature.

As early as the initial period of his revolutionary career the great leader Comrade Kim Il Sung saw art and literature as a mighty weapon in revolutionary struggle and energetically organized and led the work of developing revolutionary art and literature to suit the requirements of the revolution and the people's aspirations. In the course of this, he established in person the brilliant revolutionary tradition of art and literature in our country.

On the basis of the character and tasks of our revolution, which he defined scientifically, the great leader fully elucidated the mission and

role of revolutionary art and literature, the principles of creation and the method of their implementation. In this way he evolved the thought and theory on Juche art and literature for the first time in history. He opened up a new era of Juche revolutionary art and literature by personally creating many revolutionary masterpieces, including dramas, operas and songs.

The art and literature created during the anti-Japanese revolutionary struggle became the most precious ideological and cultural wealth of the Korean people; it was the historical root of our art and literature and contributed greatly to human culture.

Through the application of the Juche idea, anti-Japanese revolutionary art and literature were able to show the essence of the anti-imperialist, national-liberation struggle and of the communist movement, and create brilliant communist characters of a new type equipped with the Juche outlook on the world. As a result, anti-Japanese revolutionary art and literature thoroughly implemented the principles of the Party, working-class and popular spirits, became Juche revolutionary art and literature, national in form and socialist in content, and a powerful organizer, educator and agitator, which aroused the masses to the revolutionary struggle, for the first time in the history of art and literature in our country.

These characteristics of anti-Japanese revolutionary art and literature are most evident in the works created by the great leader. The works written by him are not only diverse in content and form but also serve as classic examples for their great ideological and artistic qualities.

According to the information available, his personal creations include, first, the serious dramas such as *The Sea of Blood*, *The Fate of a Self-defence Corps Man*, *The Flower Girl* and *An Jung Gun Shoots Ito Hirobumi*, which depict in breadth and depth people who come to understand the revolution through their own grim lives and who take the road of struggle. Secondly, there are his comedies, such as *A Mountain Shrine* and *The Celebration Meeting*, which are caustic satires that sneer at the enemies of the revolution, fully expose their reactionary nature and point to the inevitability of their collapse. They clearly demonstrate the justice of the revolutionary struggle and the certainty of its victory. Another satire, *Three Pretenders*, depicts the factional strife among the nationalists. Thirdly, *A Letter from a Daughter* and other works are both serious and comic in nature. In addition, there are song and dance works such as *The Single Heart Pole* and a large number of revolutionary poems and songs, including *Song of the Anti-Japanese War*, *Song of the Ten-point Programme of the ARF*, *Song of the 'Punitive Expedition'* and *Song of the Sea of Blood*.

These brilliant works, though different in content and form, first raised urgent and fundamental questions in the Korean people's struggle for national independence and class emancipation, then gave correct answers to them. These classics also profoundly and artistically delineate the content of our revolutionary traditions, which consist of the indomitable communist revolutionary spirit, priceless revolutionary achievements and experience in the struggle, and the

revolutionary work method and popular work style, based on the ideological system of Juche. The Fate of a Self-defence Corps Man, which you are going to adapt to the cinema, is itself one of these masterpieces.

If you are to produce an excellent film version of The Fate of a Self-defence Corps Man, it is important that you first understand the new characteristics of the content and form of this work. For this purpose you must have a good understanding of its historical background and educational aim.

The situation at home and abroad at the time when this work was being created and performed was very complex.

The imperialists' way out of the catastrophic economic crisis that swept the world from the late 1920s to the early 1930s was aggression against other countries and fascism—the unbridled exploitation of the people and the destruction of the revolutionary forces in their own countries.

Politically the Japanese imperialist aggressors expanded their crushing fascist machinery on a large scale in our country. They resorted to a frantic, bloody repression of the national-liberation struggle and forcibly pursued the policy of making the Koreans 'imperial subjects' while at the same time fussing about 'same ancestry and same stock' and 'oneness of Japan and Korea'. Economically they schemed to turn the Korean peninsula into a 'durable hinterland' for their continental invasion. The national and class contradictions between Japanese imperialism and the Korean people grew sharper, and the anti-Japanese sentiments of the masses from all walks of life—except for a handful of pro-Japanese elements and traitors to the nation—mounted to a fever pitch.

In this situation the great leader put forward the new strategic and tactical policy of bringing about a great upsurge in the Korean revolution as a whole, centring on the anti-Japanese armed struggle. He united the people under the banner of fighting together against the Japanese and encouraged them to rise as one in the noble war for the liberation of the country.

The Fate of a Self-defence Corps Man was created by the great leader at a time when he was detailing the far-reaching plan to call the broad sections of the patriotic forces to the struggle against the Japanese imperialists by further extending and developing the anti-Japanese national united front movement.

This work provides a profound picture of the process by which the people, exploited and oppressed as they were under the colonial rule of Japanese imperialism, awoke to class consciousness and rose in armed struggle against Japanese imperialism. Such an idea is also contained in The Sea of Blood. But these two works are different in their descriptive methods.

Mirroring, through the character of a mother, our people's wretched slavery after being deprived of their country by the Japanese imperialist invaders. The Sea of Blood shows that the Korean people had to take the road of revolution to achieve national independence and class emancipation. The Fate of a Self-defence Corps Man lays

strong emphasis on the idea that the only way for the Korean people to survive was to take the road of revolution against the Japanese. It does this through the portrayal of a young poor peasant who tries to realize his wish even though he is a slave.

Even when the defeat of Japanese imperialism was at hand some people, lacking the spirit of national independence and class awareness, regarded their loss of rights and their poverty as their fate. They considered it impossible to hold out against the Japanese imperialist invaders, even though they knew the enemy's brutality, and went so far as to harbour illusions about Japanese imperialism. The Fate of a Self-defence Corps Man awakens these people to the truth that they can acquire the right to existence and lead a genuine life only when they take the road of revolution to destroy Japanese imperialism and win back the country they have lost.

The Sea of Blood portrays the heroine as growing into a revolutionary under the influence of the anti-Japanese armed struggle, specifically under the guidance of a revolutionary organization; The Fate of a Self-defence Corps Man depicts the hero as making a revolutionary resolve and undertaking the struggle as a result of his own experience, without the guidance and assistance of a revolutionary organization.

The process by which people acquire a revolutionary outlook on the world is not simple. As the great leader has said, people's revolutionary world outlook is formed, consolidated and developed through definite stages of the development of their consciousness under the influence of tireless ideological education and through their own practical struggle. So this process may vary according to people's characters and their living environments. The mother in The Sea of Blood gains a revolutionary world outlook through the education she receives from the revolutionary organization and from her own practical struggle. Kap Ryong on the other hand, the hero of The Fate of a Self-defence Corps Man, experiences the misery and humiliation of being subjected to every manner of mistreatment and disdain during his forced service in the 'self-defence corps', until at last he realizes his class status and commits himself to the struggle. Thus, unlike the mother in The Sea of Blood, Kap Ryong acquires his revolutionary view on the world through a relatively complex process.

The Sea of Blood and The Fate of a Self-defence Corps Man are both revolutionary masterpieces which profoundly portray the fate of people who embark on the road of revolution.

Through its heroine who awakens gradually to class consciousness and develops in the struggle. The Sea of Blood extensively mirrors the features of the period from the first to the second half of the 1930s and the general current of the Korean revolution, centring on the anti-Japanese armed struggle. The Fate of a Self-defence Corps Man depicts the historical features of the latter half of the 1930s and the necessity to wage the armed struggle by describing how the hero, who against his will has become involved in treachery by harbouring a transient illusion about the enemy, awakens to class consciousness.

You will be able to understand that through this descriptive method The Fate of a Self-defence Corps Man depicts life from a different angle, because its educational objectives and aims are different from those of The Sea of Blood, even though both masterpieces handle the lives of the oppressed and exploited poor and draw similar ideological conclusions from the destiny of the people.

The Fate of a Self-defence Corps Man, as an immortal masterpiece which opened up a new phase in the development of anti-Japanese revolutionary art and literature because of its profound ideological content and peculiar artistic depiction, added lustre to the revolutionary tradition of art and literature in our country and did much to encourage the great masses to rise against Japanese imperialism.

ON THE SEED OF THE FATE OF A SELF-DEFENCE CORPS MAN

In your questions you asked how the seed of The Fate of a Self-defence Corps Man should be understood. I consider this question very important because it is imperative to have a correct understanding of its ideological essence if you are to adapt this masterpiece properly to the screen.

In short, the seed means the core of a work, and as such, therefore, always serves as the basis and the starting point in the analysis of a work. Without a correct understanding of the core it is impossible to grasp the ideological and artistic qualities of a work fully and adapt it to the screen properly.

You say that some of you have tried to identify the germ of the idea of The Fate of a Self-defence Corps Man with that of The Sea of Blood, but they are different from each other, just as the lives described in them are.

Through the life of a mother who suffers from exploitation and oppression under the colonial rule of Japanese imperialism, the masterpiece The Sea of Blood shows truthfully and in depth what a revolution is, why it is necessary to conduct a revolution and how it should be done. From this work emerges the strong idea that the bloody sea of suffering must be turned into a bloody sea of struggle. In order to bring about a radical change in the fate of the Korean people, whose human dignity and independence were trampled upon and whose elementary right to existence was blotted out, it was necessary first of all to destroy Japanese imperialism and wipe out its conspirators—the landlords, comprador capitalists and traitors to the nation. This meant that the Korean revolution was a struggle to destroy Japanese imperialism and liberate the nation, as well as a far-reaching class struggle to eliminate landlords, comprador capitalists and national traitors.

If people are to turn out with revolutionary fervour in the struggle, they must have a clear awareness of the revolutionary truth. The process by which they acquire this truth through practical struggle is precisely the process by which they understand the revolution and form a revolutionary outlook on the world.

By describing in depth how a mother, who knows nothing about the

revolution, is gradually forced through harsh trials to open her eyes to it and join the struggle, *The Sea of Blood* profoundly elucidates the great anti-imperialist revolutionary thought that exploitation and oppression will always lead to the resistance of the people and the brilliant thought of the armed revolt.

The mother gradually acquires profound revolutionary thinking, first under the influence of her husband and children and then through her own struggle thanks to the education she has received from the revolutionary organization. It is the character of the mother that illustrates the seed of the work.

As *The Sea of Blood* shows, the seed of a work is realized through the character and life of the hero, so the seed of a work can always be grasped correctly through an analysis of the work as a whole, with the character and life of the hero at the centre.

The Fate of a Self-defence Corps Man deals with the life of Kap Ryong and his family, who are of the same social status as the mother in *The Sea of Blood*. But Kap Ryong's life is different from that of the mother. Kap Ryong has no organization or mentor to influence him politically or give him revolutionary education. This is why he has to go through a comparatively complex process in forming his revolutionary outlook on the world. We can see this clearly in the process of the development of the ideological consciousness of the hero who is tormented and confused, unable to decide whether to join the 'self-defence corps' or not. It is a process by which he rids himself of his illusions about this traitorous organization and finds his way to a genuine life.

The hero, who is simple, good-natured, honest and devoid of class consciousness, gradually becomes aware of the contradictions in colonial society, where human dignity and independence are trampled underfoot. He comes to realize that a people without their country and state power will only die from unbearable sufferings, however hard they may try to live honestly. It is not until this reveals itself to him that he feels his own human dignity and self-confidence and regenerates into a new, independent man who levels his gun at the heart of the enemy. In other words, he realizes that the only way out of the impossible situation where he has to die no matter if he obeys or disobeys the orders of the Japanese imperialists is to fight the enemy, to take the road of revolution.

As the character of the hero shows, the germ of the idea of *The Fate of a Self-defence Corps Man* is that he cannot avoid death whether he joins or does not join the 'self-defence corps'. This is the philosophical depth, the human dilemma of this masterpiece.

Through the lives of Kap Ryong, Chol Sam and Man Sik, the work shows why death is unavoidable. They are all the sons of sharecroppers. They are all living in misery, Kap Ryong with his widower father, Chol Sam with his widowed mother, and Man Sik with his younger sister. There is not much difference in their social environment and living conditions, but their specific domestic problems, their attitudes and approaches to life are different from one another. These are preconditions for variety in the description of

people's characters and lives. The difference in the level of people's consciousness expressed in their judgement of life is bound to be revealed in their lives.

The seed of a work can be truthful and vivid only when it is clarified through different human characters and lives. If lives are portrayed in a stereotyped manner through one or two characters alone, the result will be a simple work that is incapable of arousing people's sympathy.

It is only because the characters of Kap Ryong, Chol Sam, Man Sik and all the other downtrodden and exploited poor people are represented truthfully that it is possible to illustrate clearly the miserable fate of enslaved people whom only death awaits whichever way they act, and to shed light on the dark reality of life under the colonial rule of Japanese imperialism.

Korea under Japanese oppression was a prison and a living hell. The miserable Korean people had no place to live in a land where the Japanese imperialist invaders were rampant. They had no room to stand when alive and no burial ground when dead. People who were dragged into the 'self-defence corps', like Kap Ryong and Man Sik, died to no purpose as cheap shields for the Japanese imperialists, and those like Chol Sam who did not join the 'self-defence corps' perished eventually from exhausting labour and hunger. The Korean people had no way out of their social misfortune and national suffering so long as tyrannical Japanese imperialist rule continued. The ideological essence of *The Fate of a Self-defence Corps Man*, that only death awaits one whether one joins the 'self-defence corps' or not, is so profound and instructive precisely because that was the reality.

What are the reactions of the three young men on hearing from the village headman that they have been called up for service in the 'self-defence corps'?

Take the case of Chol Sam first.

He tries to persuade his friends to run away, saying that a man who joins the 'self-defence corps' is as good as dead. While his two friends hesitate, he alone escapes from involvement in the cursed service. As you see, Chol Sam is a young Korean man of clear conscience who would never serve as the running dog of the Japanese even if he were to die. But he does not go beyond the bounds of passive resistance because he does not know the path of a genuine life.

Chol Sam is unaware that he cannot bring about a radical change in his fate unless he struggles against the social system, which protects such landlords and capitalists as the boss of the lumber station and the village headman, and against Japanese imperialism, which patronizes these enemies. It is not until the moment of his tragic death at the site of the construction of a fort that he realizes that the fate of a 'self-defence corps' man is inescapable wherever he is, whether among lumberjacks or anywhere else, in a world ruled by Japanese.

Man Sik, who realizes the truth of Chol Sam's words through his own experience, though belatedly, deserts the 'self-defence corps',

but is caught and shot.

Chol Sam and Man Sik take different paths, but their fates converge in a tragic end. Why? The tragic end which they cannot escape, limited as they are in ideological consciousness and strength, is due to Japanese imperialist colonial rule, which imposes only misfortune and suffering upon the Korean people. The deaths of Chol Sam and Man Sik are a clear indication of the seed of this masterpiece: that death is inevitable for both those who join the 'self-defence corps' and those who do not.

The seed of the work is revealed in full through the fate of Kap Ryong.

He undergoes the process of accumulating serious experience and of awakening to class consciousness before he turns his rifle on the Japanese imperialist aggressors. He wakes up from his illusions, sees the enemies in their true colours and burns with determination to take revenge on the Japanese imperialist aggressors. But he does all these things only when he had had bitter experience of the brutalities committed by the 'self-defence corps' against the people, and of the murder of Man Sik, Chol Sam and his own father. He awakens to class consciousness and develops ideologically and spiritually step by step through every event in his life.

In order to have a correct understanding of the development of the character of the hero, it is necessary to seek the essential cause of his suffering first in the social reality of those days. His illusion about the 'self-defence corps' is caused by the Japanese imperialist stratagem, and his sufferings, too, are due to reality itself, which conflicts with his illusion. The philosophical depth of this work lies in the fact that it points to the contemporary social system as the cause of the people's sufferings, and that it clarifies the fundamental question of social revolution through one man's destiny.

Clearly Kap Ryong's misfortune can also be attributed to the man himself. However much the Japanese imperialists and their stooges may spread illusions about the 'self-defence corps', no man with class awareness will ever be taken in by such appeasement and trickery. Kap Ryong allows himself to be dragged into the 'self-defence corps' because he does not know that there is an insurmountable barrier between his desire and reality. This means that his illusion about the 'self-defence corps' is due to misunderstanding rather than to ideological sympathy with it. A proper understanding of this point will prevent exaggeration of his ideological limitations.

Kap Ryong endures all the mistreatment and humiliation, shouldering the heavy burden imposed upon his family by harsh reality, because he believes that in spite of his poverty he can marry kind-hearted Kum Sun and fulfil his filial duty to his father, who does backbreaking work as a servant and sharecropper, pinning his hopes on his only son.

This 'dream' of Kap Ryong is intertwined with his illusion about the 'self-defence corps'. He could have run away like Chol Sam, had he lived alone, but the thought of his duty to his father keeps him

from doing that. His mistake lies in thinking that he can to a small extent do his duty to his father, fooled as he is by the promise that the families of the men of the 'self-defence corps' will be exempted from the labour draft. This mistake blinds him to the truth that death awaits both those who join the 'self-defence corps' and those who do not.

The process by which Kap Ryong awakens from his illusion about the true path of filial duty is precisely the process by which he learns, through experience, the truth that death is inevitable whether or not he is serving in the 'self-defence corps'. It is also the process by which he establishes his revolutionary outlook on the world, and finally also the process by which the idea of the work is revealed.

As can be seen in the play, he discovers the true path of filial duty only when he himself overthrows the exploitative society which does not allow him to perform his duty to his parent, no matter how great his desire to do so is; that is, only when he extricates himself from his fate as a stateless slave. In the play this idea is fully revealed by the change in the development of his character when he rises in mutiny, turning his rifle on his enemies, and takes the road of revolution.

This idea has a firm grip on the hearts of people still today and powerfully encourages them along the road of revolution, because it is derived from the lesson of a grim life.

The question of the line of the political organization directly concerns the political and ideological character of a work, and so it must always be handled with prudence.

You think that all works must follow the political organization line, but this is a biased view. There may or may not be one according to the work. Among the masterpieces, for instance. The Sea of Blood has this line but not The Fate of a Self-defence Corps Man.

The former deals with the anti-Japanese national-liberation struggle and the communist movement, centring on the anti-Japanese armed struggle. This work describes how, under the direct guidance of the political organization, people are revolutionized and formed into revolutionary organizations, and how the revolutionary forces in mining and farming communities and the latent revolutionary forces in the cities unite with the standing revolutionary armed forces to rise in a nationwide armed revolt against Japanese imperialism.

In The Sea of Blood the main emphasis is given to the idea of the strength of unity and the significance of the revolutionary organization in rallying the broad masses of the people to rouse them to the revolution. This work is of tremendous significance in showing how a great victory was won in the armed revolt by means of a proper link between the leadership of the political organization and the revolutionary struggle of the masses.

The existence of the line of the political organization in The Sea of Blood is a certain requirement of its plot, based on the seed of the play.

It would be a mistake to think that the political line is a must in all

cases, regardless of the characteristics of the works, and that revolutionary fighters. Party workers and political workers must appear in the story and talk about political affairs. It would also be incorrect to judge that the political character of a work depends on the existence of the line of the political organization. This is a stereotyped view that measures the value of a work by the standard of conventional and outdated patterns. It is impossible to evaluate the ideological and artistic qualities of a work properly if it is interpreted according to a set pattern.

Just as different works have different seeds and different themes and show different characters in different situations, so they are different in their specific educational purposes. Thus it cannot be said that every revolutionary work must follow the line of the political organization in a set way.

In our evaluation of works we must always closely examine them one by one in the light of what ideological questions they raise and what human characters and lives they describe, to settle the questions proposed. If you find the absence of the line of the political organization in a work that ought to have it, in view of the demand of the seed and its educational purpose, or if you discover a political line superfluously established in a work which does not need it, you must take issue with it.

Should the line of the political organization be established indiscriminately without careful thought having been given to the specific artistic features of the work, the result will be to leave the idea bare.

As I said before. The Fate of a Self-defence Corps Man occupies a special place among the works of revolutionary art and literature. The hero Kap Ryong is a simple and honest young man who does all he can to make his father happy in his twilight years, his father who has been subjected to every manner of hardship while toiling as an itinerant farm hand and sharecropper in Korea and Liaodong (A Chinese province-Tr.). Hoping that good fortune will come after the hardship, even if it means struggling along the road of treachery against his will for the sake of the happiness of his father and for the sake of his home, the hero has to experience more suffering than a man can endure until he realizes the truth that fighting the enemy is the only way to survive.

His forced recruitment into the 'self-defence corps' on the morning of his marriage, his humiliating life in the corps, where he is given the lash both for the good and evil he has done, the barbarous hooliganism of the 'self-defence corps' members, who even break into a house during a wedding ceremony to plunder it, the enormous shock he receives from the workers when he is driven out to put down the striking lumberjacks, the mortal shooting of Man Sik, and the death of Chol Sam, with whom he swore to share life and death, and the death of his father whom he intended to look after with all his heart—the accumulation of all these bloody experiences impels him to resist the life imposed upon him and to fight the enemy.

The process by which people are awakened to revolutionary

awareness may vary. They can acquire revolutionary consciousness through their own experience, from some outside influence and through receiving education. The blossoming of Kap Ryong's revolutionary consciousness is not the result of any other person's influence or guidance. His own downtrodden life teaches him that the only way to survive is to rise in revolt and take revenge on the enemy. Therefore, Kap Ryong's mutiny is a logical explosion and a natural outcome of his experience.

The development of the hero's character is natural and reasonable in that the road he has travelled, the road he has found in his arduous life, joins the road of the glorious anti-Japanese armed struggle to win back the downtrodden country and uphold the dignity of the nation. It is also natural and reasonable because the course of the development of his character proves the inevitability and validity of the line of the armed struggle: that the oppressed people can destroy the imperialist invaders and the reactionary ruling system and win genuine freedom and emancipation only when they, arms in hand, fight counterrevolutionary violence with revolutionary violence.

Because its content is so profound, *The Fate of a Self-defence Corps Man* still plays an important revolutionary role in imbuing the people with the spirit to fight their national and class enemies, defeating not only US imperialism but also Japanese militarism, which is reviving under the patronage of it.

As this masterpiece shows, the political character of a work is not something that can be brought forth only by political speeches made by some of its characters, or by the establishment of the line of the political organization. Its political character is defined first of all by the requirement of the seed as well as the theme that expresses the requirement. It is clear that if the line of the organization were established in the 'self-defence corps', ignoring the logic of depiction, the hero, the son of a poor peasant, would quickly receive revolutionary influence and take the road of struggle.

Now you will clearly understand a few reasons why the line of the political organization is not established in this work.

This is, first, because of the requirement of the seed and the educational purpose of the work.

The establishment of an organizational line in this work would make it impossible to develop the germ of the idea of the work—that death is inevitable for both those who join the 'self-defence corps' and those who do not. If the line was established in the village or in the 'self-defence corps', Kap Ryong and Man Sik, both from the basic class, would not be dragged into the 'self-defence corps' at the outset, or they would run away from it as soon as they were forced to join. If the circumstances demanded, they might stay in it, but carry out assignments for the underground organization. In that case the character of Kap Ryong would develop along a fundamentally different course, and the destiny of Chol Sam and Man Sik would also be otherwise. If Chol Sam and Man Sik were to awaken to class consciousness and take the road of struggle instead of dying purposelessly as they do, and if Kap Ryong were to awaken from his

illusion about the 'self-defence corps' sooner and join the revolution, it would be impossible, ultimately, to meet the requirement of the seed that they have to die whether they serve in the 'self-defence corps' or not, even though the work would be dealing with the reality of Japanese imperialist entrenchment.

Moreover, if Kap Ryong and his friends were to realize everything from the outset through the establishment of the organizational line, it would be impossible to achieve the educational purpose of the work: to awaken the broad masses of all social strata who are ignorant of the anti-popular character of the colonial ruling system, win over to the revolution even those who have been forced and deceived into serving enemy institutions and rouse them to an all-people resistance. If there were an organizational line, the heroes would be awakened to class consciousness through the education and influence of the organization from the outset and join in the revolutionary struggle to destroy Japanese imperialism. That would result in a different kind of work, showing how awakened people develop into revolutionaries in the struggle.

Second, the development of Kap Ryong's character precludes the need for an organizational line.

You wondered merely if the line of the political organization was necessary, but failed to give thought to what would happen to the fates of the characters should there be a political line.

If the story included such a line, the revolutionary consciousness of the hero would develop not through his own experience but through education and leadership from the revolutionary organization. In that case Kap Ryong would have to be handled as a character who grows into a communist in the grim revolutionary trial, like the heroine of *The Sea of Blood*, rather than as a character who takes a first step towards the struggle after having undergone grave experiences. That would result in disparity between the hero's character and the seed and end in a failure to represent the seed through the development of the hero's character. This explains why there is no line of the political organization in this work.

Third, the story itself does not permit the existence of the organizational line.

The main story begins with Kap Ryong's forced draft into the 'self-defence corps', which destroys his simple ideal of marrying Kum Sun, building a harmonious home and taking care of his elderly father. Should the organizational line be included, the story would have to take a sidetrack, and the events that teach him such serious lessons would have to be replaced with totally different ones.

Fourth, the characteristics of dramatic organization do not admit the organizational line.

The existence of the organizational line would make it necessary to describe the life of a man who goes straight out onto the road of revolution under the influence of the organization, or the life of a man who is awakened to class consciousness and led out onto the road of struggle under the guidance of the organization. Therefore, it would be impossible to draw on the line of Kap Ryong's fate and life,

which is full of hardship. In this case his character would not be able to develop up to the scene in which the fort is constructed, where the illusion he harbours about the 'self-defence corps' vanishes and the reason why a genuine life can be found only on the road of revolution is revealed to him. Only when the line of the hero's destiny is drawn up to the scene in which the fort is constructed can his hatred for Japanese imperialism and his determination to fight build intensively up to the decisive, dramatic climax.

As you see, *The Fate of a Self-defence Corps Man* is a work which depicts the destiny of a man who embarks on the road of struggle without the line of the political organization, and the drama is organized accordingly.

If you understand these ideological and artistic qualities of the work correctly, the answer to your question will be evident.

THE DRAMATIC CLIMAX AND THE MOMENT OF MUTINY

In your questions you wondered if it would not be desirable to place the moment of mutiny a little earlier and if the hero's mental awareness should increase more at that moment.

A correct understanding of the dramatic setting of the mutiny and the hero's mental attitude in this scene is important in grasping the ideological and artistic characteristics of *The Fate of a Self-defence Corps Man*.

In this work mutiny on the part of the hero constitutes the dramatic climax. Even if you have correctly analysed the motives of the development of the drama, you will have a mistaken idea of the image of the work as a whole unless you place the climax at the right moment.

The dramatic climax is the critical point where the contradictory human relationships are ruptured. Contradictions in life that come to a rupture at their highest point can be called the general form of dramatic organization.

In a dramatic work the climax must result from the pressing requirement of the human relationship and events, which have become intertwined and developed through the complex process of life, and end in an inevitable explosion. This is the logic of dramatic development, which cannot be delayed or accelerated arbitrarily by the writer. If this logic is ignored, the drama will lose its truthfulness and become artificial. The moment of the mutiny at the fort construction site is well timed as the dramatic climax.

Dramatic setting must always conform to the character and logic of life, as well as to the requirement of the seed. The motive for the mutiny in this work represents the mature demand of life, and the mutiny itself can be nothing other than a decisive action from the point of view of both the logical development of the character and the logical progress of life.

The hero rises in revolt at the fort construction site, but this explosive action has been prepared through a long and serious dramatic build-up.

The process that culminates with the hero's revolt is a series of

dramatic events: his forced entry into service in the 'self-defence corps' on the morning of his wedding; his coercive military training and every manner of humiliation and mistreatment; the psychological pain and resentment he feels at the assault and plunder of a house during a wedding ceremony by the hooligans of the 'self-defence corps'; the shock he gets from the lumber workers at the time of his involvement in the repression of a strike; Man Sik's desertion and death; and finally the event when even his own father is dragged to the fort construction site.

All this dramatic arrangement is by no means a simple collection or repetition of incidents. As events develop, the characters' dramatic relations develop as well, to become intertwined more intensely, and in this process the hero gradually acquires a deeper understanding of reality. This means that the hero is awakened to class consciousness step by step as he encounters each new happening. It would be inconceivable to talk about the shaping of the hero's revolutionary world outlook separately from the dramatic events that build up to the moment of the mutiny.

On the eve of the mutiny the hero is full of hatred and resentment for the enemy. Psychologically, he is an imminent tempest. The hero in this mental state is provoked into taking decisive action by the death of his father. Therefore, the motive for the revolt is in no way accidental or artificial.

If you think that the motive could be provided earlier, for example in the scene in which Man Sik is shot, you are mistaken. Even in this scene the hero is aflame with hatred and resentment, but these feelings are not yet mature enough to push him into the heroic decision to resist, because he is not yet class conscious to a sufficient degree and because the situation, too, is not ripe for mutiny.

If the hero were to revolt when Man Sik is shot, the theme and idea of the work would not be clarified fully. Without describing the destiny of his father and Chol Sam to the end, it would be impossible to emphasize the theme that the happiness of an individual and even the least desire to do one's filial duty cannot be realized so long as one remains enslaved, and more importantly the idea that subservience to the enemy or entreating him is useless and that the only way to save one's destiny is to fight the Japanese.

The moment of the mutiny must not occur earlier. Kap Ryong can take decisive action only when his resentment and wrath at the loss of Man Sik, Chol Sam and his own father at the hands of his enemies flood his heart. If you ignore the process of the hero's ideological and mental development and place the moment of the mutiny earlier, you will violate the logic of life and destroy the veracity of the work. Nor would doing so increase the hero's mental awareness.

The depth of this work lies in the fact that life is portrayed so truthfully that people in the audience, full of impatience in the scene of Man Sik's death, shout out to demand why the hero is simply standing there, lamenting, instead of levelling his gun at the enemy. If the mutiny is placed in the scene of Man Sik's death in an attempt to raise the mental awareness of the hero, then one question after

another will be raised as to why the hero did not run away like Chol Sam when he was forced into the 'self-defence corps', why he did not desert the enemy camp like Man Sik after witnessing the plunder at the wedding feast, and why he did not make up his mind to revolt when he was driven out to put down the strikers. If this way of thinking should predominate, the events of life will be omitted one after another and only preset logic will remain.

The situation would not permit Kap Ryong to take action even if he were to make up his mind to revolt in the scene where Man Sik is shot. It would be unreasonable for the hero to revolt in a situation where he is surrounded by rings of Japanese soldiers and 'self-defence corps' men.

The scene of Man Sik's death is a very important moment in the development of the hero's ideological consciousness. There is no need to fear that, if the revolt is delayed, the absence of resistance even at the sight of Man Sik's death may be regarded as a blemish on the hero's mental development. The hero's presence in this scene is necessary because of the need to reveal the idea of the work through his personal experience. The profound shock he receives in this scene will add fuel to the flames of his resentment towards the class enemy in the decisive scene.

All that is needed is to give a profound picture of the innermost world of the hero, who is bitterly indignant at the sight of the death of his beloved friend, but unable to go any further.

The climax of the work accurately portrays the hero's mental attitude. Even if the motive of the explosion is serious and the situation is pressing, the decisive scene will not move people deeply unless the hero himself feels the seriousness and urgency.

The dramatic climax represents the climax of the hero's experience. Therefore, it is necessary to unfold the world of his experience truthfully in the climax.

Rising in revolt, the hero opens his heart, looking back upon his bitter past. Because his own experience has taught him which way to go, Kap Ryong's appeal must be expressed in simple but fervent words rather than in a political speech. What if the hero is presented as making an awkward speech in an attempt to show his mental attitude while stirring people up to mutiny? His character will be reduced to nothing.

The depth of a person's mental attitude can never be measured in a smart political speech. 'You will die whether or not you join the 'self-defence corps'—there is no point in begging the enemy for mercy or entreating him—the only way to live is to destroy the enemy—let all of us go into the mountains to the guerrillas and fight the Japanese instead of being fooled by them: with such simple but fervent words expressing his own bitter experience and lessons, Kap Ryong grips the attention of the audience and pulls at their heartstrings far more effectively than if he were to make a rigid political speech.

I think I have answered the main points you raised.

Other problems which you say you have discussed among

your?elves are related to the characters of the Japanese soldiers and policemen, to the life of the '°self-defence corps'± men and to other specific aspects of depiction. These problems have virtually been solved in the work.

The characters of the Japanese soldiers and policemen shown in the work, for instance, are vivid enough to expose their brutal, fraud?ulent and cunning natures.

Take an example. Ordered by the garrison commander to bring in all the young men who have been called up to serve in the '°self-defence corps'±, the Japanese officer Sasaki goes to Kap Ryong, 's vil?lage with the commander of the '°self-defence corps'± and has the young men dragged off by force. Old man Choe, Kap Ryong, 's father, prostrates himself before the enemy and entreats him to wait at least until the wedding ceremony is over, the wedding of his son, the fourth generation of only sons in his family line. But Sasaki just sits on his horse and grins. In this scene Sasaki is not prominent, but his grin reveals the hidden brutal nature of a man who has drowned many people in a sea of blood.

Shooting or stabbing people is not the only way in which the enemy displays his brutality. The features of the Japanese imperi?alist characters emanate from their aggressive nature. Therefore, the actors who play the parts of Japanese soldiers must first clear?ly understand their aggressive nature and portray it saliently. Whether the audience feels a strong hatred for the Japanese or not depends on whether or not the actors who play the parts of Sasaki and other Japanese soldiers and policemen closely study their parts with feelings of hatred for the Japanese imperialists and a determination to take revenge on them, and depict their aggressive nature accurately.

The brutal treatment of the '°self-defence corps'± men, too, is shown glaringly and intensively in the scene of training. Kap Ryong, Man Sik and other men are beaten, trampled upon and bruised for no reason at the training ground. What more can be shown, and how? Good portrayal in the training scene alone will infuriate the audience to such an extent that they will clench their fists at the sight of such animalistic behaviour in the '°self-defence corps'±.

The Japanese soldiers, ' brutalities towards the men can be shown further in the scenes at the fort construction site and at the village. Using a large number of scenes to show the Japanese soldiers, ' inhu?mane treatment and humiliation of the '°self-defence corps'± in using it as cannon fodder is not the most effective way to describe the mis?erable life in the '°self-defence corps'±. Concentrating on vital scenes will be more impressive and effective than spreading the description thinly.

The same can be said of the miserable scene at the felling ground. That the felling ground is a death trap can be shown eloquently through the woman with her children from Samsu: they have taken more than a month, begging on the way, to see their husband and father at the felling ground, only to find that he has been killed three days before their arrival, crushed by a falling tree. If there is a need to give more prominence to the wretched life of the lumberjacks, many

things can be done through the directing and acting, fine art and photography.

It is necessary to give deeper consideration to the question of presenting the hero as an acquaintance of the bridegroom in the scene at the house of the wedding ceremony. If they are to be shown on speaking terms, the bridegroom ought to be introduced in the scene where the hero is working at the felling ground, or something similar, but the work has no such arrangement. Characters who are strangers to each other need not be made each other's acquaintance for the sake of dramatic effect. You must not forget that this kind of artificial arrangement can impair the truthfulness of a work.

Here it would be even better to let the hero realize, at the sight of the pitiable plight of a young stranger and his father, that all poor Koreans share the same fate, and to let him feel more keenly that the '°self-defence corps'± is anti-people. Then the hero's experience will not be confined to his own person alone, but extended over all of Korean society.

In handling the love affair between Kap Ryong and Kum Sun, you must never give the audience the impression of a triangular relationship by bringing the commander of the '°self-defence corps'± between them for the sake of interest. You must not obscure the idea for the sake of romantic interest.

Kap Ryong and Kum Sun are children of poor peasants. Their simple wish is trampled underfoot by the Japanese and their stooges, such as the '°self-defence corps'± commander. So their love is underlaid with a current of burning hatred for their enemies who trample their simple wish. If the '°self-defence corps'± commander is depicted as coveting Kum Sun, though he is unrequited, then it will stain the descriptive colour.

Next, I would like to touch on how to deal with the negative characters.

In this work a number of characters appear as villains in the conflict, such as the Japanese garrison commander and the officer Sasaki, the '°self-defence corps'± commander and his father, the owner of the lumber station, and the village headman who mentions an '°emergency situation'± whenever he speaks. This being the case, the main line of the conflict must be the main target of the revolution. If you do not distinguish the main target from others in conflict, because all negative characters are the enemy, then the drama may lose the main direction of its attack and become desultory. The Japanese garrison commander and Sasaki must form the axis on the line of negative characters, and the rest must group around them. If the garrison commander and Sasaki are knocked down, the '°self-defence corps'± commander, the village headman and the like are bound to lose their support and fall like a rotten fence.

Lastly, a few words of emphasis concerning the truthful depiction of details.

If you are to give truthful images, you must carefully portray every detail of life. You must always remember that a single detail, if neglected, would impair the truthfulness of the whole work.

Many of you lack any experience or idea of life in the 1930s. Therefore, you must first check historical references in the selection of even a costume or a small hand prop. What would happen if headgear in the style of the present day were used by workers or self-defence corpsmen? You must bear in mind that such a mistake, though it might seem trivial, would falsify the whole work and bring grave consequences.

The Fate of a Self-defence Corps Man was written and first performed nearly forty years ago. However hard you may try to revive the original, various subjective views of the artists will tend to affect the adaptation of the stage version to the screen. So you must continue to conduct a close study of the original. In settling the questions arising in your creative work you must accept the truth of the original without any present-day distortions. Only when you rely fully on the original will you be able to produce an excellent screen version of this masterpiece.

Producing a film version of the masterpiece The Fate of a Self-defence Corps Man, the perfect embodiment of the great leader's revolutionary thought, is an important opportunity for you to acquaint yourselves more fully with the Party's monolithic ideology. It is also a historic undertaking which is of great significance in raising film art in our country to a new, higher level in that it follows the example of other great Korean film masterpieces.

So I would like to assign a few tasks to the creative staff of The Fate of a Self-defence Corps Man who are taking part in the production of the film version of this masterpiece, which is to be handed down to our posterity.

First, the whole creative staff must regard the process of adapting The Fate of a Self-defence Corps Man to the screen as a process of absorbing the Party's monolithic ideological system, of revolutionizing yourselves and assimilating yourselves thoroughly to the working class and of tempering and testing your Party spirit. You must fully adopt the communist attitude of doing creative work in a revolutionary way and of living militantly.

The anti-Japanese revolutionary fighters, though not professional artists, created many revolutionary works high in ideological and artistic quality even during the difficult times of struggle. The secret of their success was that the anti-Japanese guerrillas unconditionally carried out the great leader's instruction to make art and literature a revolutionary weapon. They did this by fully arming themselves with the great Juche idea, uniting as one in thought and purpose and helping and leading one another forward.

In fact, the anti-Japanese guerrillas had no time or conditions set aside for their creative activity. The fine rooms and stages you have now for your creative work were unimaginable in those days. An

improvised, simple platform with a white sheet as a backdrop was their stage, a lantern or a burning pile of rubbish provided their illumination, and kneaded flour or grass roots provided their makeup. Even in those arduous conditions the fighters were able to create and present to the public many revolutionary works with excellent ideological and artistic qualities, because they were firmly resolved to carry out their revolutionary tasks.

Film production is not just a job, but a revolutionary duty. Following the examples set by the anti-Japanese guerrillas, in the process of film-making you must equip yourselves more fully with the Party's monolithic ideology, acquire the Marxist thought on art and literature fully and profoundly and ensure that a revolutionary and communist atmosphere of creation pervades the entire collective. In particular, you must display your Party spirit to a high degree in producing the film version of this masterpiece, carry out your responsibilities to the Party and the revolution, thus proving yourselves worthy of the great leader's high trust and living up to his expectations with loyalty.

Unfailing loyalty to the great leader is the essential quality required of revolutionary artists, as well as the noblest revolutionary quality that must be maintained throughout the whole course of creation and life.

Second, all the comrades who take part in the production of the screen version of *The Fate of a Self-defence Corps Man* must set an excellent example in their creative work, right from the beginning to its final review, feeling the highest honour and pride. In this way you will prove yourselves pioneers in the creation of revolutionary works. Hence you must concentrate all your efforts and launch a speed campaign to produce an excellent film version of this masterpiece as soon as possible.

Third, the director, who is the commander of the creative group, must hold all the members of the group closely together with one thought and purpose, and push ahead with the creative work boldly under unified control. He must, at the head of the speed campaign, lead all the members so that they fulfil their duties in good faith.

Directing is the art of leadership, the art of inquiry and creation. The director must work with total devotion to the group, setting a personal example in everything. He must break with outmoded patterns and establish a new, original system of creation and method of directing.

Fourth, actors must make great efforts to acquire a correct understanding of the thoughts and feelings of the characters whom they are portraying, and delve deep into the lives of these characters so as to portray them all as living people.

Actors must have a clear understanding of their roles and create original characters.

They must on no account cling to a dogmatic pattern in analysing characters or in experiencing and reproducing their innermost worlds. In the use of costumes and props they must portray characters vividly as typical people of the period, eliminating all that is superfluous.

Fifth, the cameraman must concentrate on portraying vivid images of life, show the heroes and others' characters formatively and make

the screen overflow with national sentiments. In particular he must refrain from misusing close-ups.

Sixth, set designers, who play an important role in the production of life-like screen images, must create make-up, costumes, hand props and settings that are in accord with the period, the specific situation and the individual characters. The make-up artists must create images of oppressed and exploited poor people exactly as they were at that period.

Seventh, those comrades who are in charge of montage and trick shots must act responsibly to launch a technical innovation campaign and produce truthful and vivid screen images.

Eighth, those comrades who are in charge of editing, dubbing, lighting, setting, costume, hand props and simulation, as well as the drivers, must all perform their duties faithfully and in a responsible manner, helping and leading one another forward and devoting all their energies and talents to producing the film as soon as possible.

Ninth, the administrative director must, under the guidance of the director, plan all matters to the last detail and subordinate all efforts to implementing the principles of the campaign.

Tenth, the Party organization of the creative group must conduct political work, work with people, substantially among the artists to ensure that they all carry out their revolutionary duty in good faith and without fail by displaying the revolutionary spirit, cherishing in their hearts honour and pride at being able to play a part in the film version of this masterpiece.

Success in the production of this film depends directly on whether or not you comrades carry out these tasks.

I strongly believe that you will carry out your assignment successfully and prove yourselves worthy of the Party's great political trust and expectations by displaying loyalty to the Party.

Korean Friendship Association (K.F.A)

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