

Fucheng Chu's Rescue of Koo Kim, the Founding Father of the Republic of Korea: Focusing on the Autobiography of Bai Fan

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Abstract: Koo Kim, the founding father of the Republic of Korea, was wanted by Japanese military and police for “Tokyo incident” and “Hongkou incident”. He took refuge to Jiaxing under the rescue of Fucheng Chu. In Jiaxing, Koo Kim also moved many times; he once lived in Haiyan and Yanjiabang, and even in fishing boats. The “South Lake Conference” which was held during this period established Koo Kim's status; the meeting was of great significance in the history of Korean independence movement.

1. Introduction

On September 30, 1996, the South Korean government awarded Fucheng Chu a “medal for the founding of the Republic of Korea (the independent medal)” in recognition of his achievements in rescuing Koo Kim, the “father of the Republic of Korea”. It is rare for a Chinese to be awarded the medal. It is also very rare for the South Korean government to award this medal to a foreigner. This medal is a witness of the friendship between China and South Korea. Today, the author tells the little-known story of Fucheng Chu to readers in order to review the history and cherish the memory of sages.

Chu Fucheng, whose style name was Huiseng, was born in Jiaxing, Zhejiang Province. He is a famous social activist, patriotic and democratic personage of China. During the period of the 1911 Revolution, Mr. Chu participated in the uprising. In response to Yat-Sen Sun's call, he took part in the Constitution Protection Movement. During the Anti-Japanese War, he took an active part in the national salvation movement and actively promoted the cooperation between the Nationalist Party and the Communist Party. On July 1, 1945, he flew to Yan'an as one of the six political members of the National Political Council, and met Zedong Mao, De Zhu, Enlai Zhou and other CPC leaders. In May 1946, the Jiusan Society was officially founded. Fucheng Chu was appointed as the central director. He was also one of the main founders of the society.

Koo Kim, whose pseudonym is Bai Fan, belongs to the Anton Kim's family. He is a legendary figure in the history of South Korea. Kim is a famous Korean independence activist and the main leader of the “Provisional Government of the Republic of Korea”. The “Provisional Government of the Republic of Korea” is the legally constituted authority of South Korea. Therefore, Koo Kim is known as the “founding father of the Republic of Korea”.

In 1932, Fucheng Chu risked the lives of his family to rescue Koo Kim, the father of the Republic of Korea, and wrote a moving story about the friendship between China and South Korea.

2. Bong-Chang Lee and the Attack on Japanese Emperor in Tokyo

After Japan launched the “September 18th Incident”, according to Koo Kim's memoirs, “one day, a middle-aged compatriot came to see me in the militia. He once lived in Longshan of the capital city, and his name was Bong-Chang Lee.” [1] He came to find Koo Kim in the hope of devoting himself to the Korean independence movement. After investigation, Koo Kim decided to send him to assassinate the Emperor of Japan because he “spoke Japanese very well. He lived in Japan as Japanese, and became the adopted son of a Japanese. He also took a Japanese name”. [1] Koo Kim

received hundreds of US dollars from donations of overseas Koreans in Hawaii, and asked Xiong Wang to go to the Shanghai ordnance factory and Xuan Jin to go to Henan to get the grenade from Zhi Liu. Then he took Lee to “Jung-geun An's house and held a simple swearing ceremony. He was given two bombs and 300 yuan... Then he went to the photo studio to take commemorative photos.” [1]

On January 8, 1932, Japanese army held a military parade. After the military parade, the emperor returned to the palace. When they went to the place between the police station outside Yingtian Gate and the official residence of the Minister of Justice, Bong-Chang Lee threw a bomb at the emperor's motorcade. The bomb exploded under the left rear wheel of the Imperial Palace Minister's carriage. It was only one meter away from the emperor's car, but the emperor's car was not damaged. Then Bong-Chang Lee threw another bomb. Although the bomb fell under the emperor's car, it was a dud. At this time, Bong-Chang Lee calmly took out the South Korean flag: the Tae-Guk flag, waved it vigorously, and repeatedly called “long live to Korean independence” until he was arrested.[2] This is the “Tokyo incident” which shocked China and foreign countries.

“The Qingdao Daily of Republic of China, an organ newspaper of the Chinese Nationalist Party, published the story with the top headline: it is unfortunate that Bong-Chang Lee, a Korean, sniped Japanese emperor but failed”. [1] Japan protested the word “unfortunate”. According to Koo Kim's recollection, “Japan immediately launched the Incident of January in Shanghai. Bong-Chang Lee's sniping at Japanese emperor and Chinese people's comments on the incident as 'unfortunate' were also reasons for the war.” [1]

Autobiography of Bai Fan records, “as soon as the Tokyo incident spread, some compatriots who used to oppose the interim government also changed their attitude and actively supported our work.” [1] At that time, the provisional government headed by Koo Kim was encouraged and decided to choose the right time for another assassination of Japanese dignitaries.

3. Bong-Gil Yoon and the Hongkou Explosion

“At that time, Bong-Gil Yoon came to me and asked if there was a plan like the Tokyo incident. He hoped I could use him. Through the heart to heart talk, I understood that Yoon was a passionate young man with profound righteousness and great ambition. I admired him very much. So I said to him, 'where there is a will, there is a way. Take it easy. I'm looking for someone like you. “[1]

On April 29, 1932, in the name of “Tianchang Festival (emperor's birthday)”, Japan held a “Victory Celebration Meeting of Songhu Battle” in Shanghai Hongkou Park, insulting and provoking the Chinese army and people. Therefore, Koo Kim decided to give Bong-Gil Yoon the task of destroying the celebration, and Yoon agreed with pleasure.

On April 26, Bong-Gil Yoon joined the “Korean patriotic group” and swore under the Tae-Guk flag: “I devote myself to the independence and freedom of the motherland. As a member of the Korean Patriotic League, I am willing to kill all enemy generals who invaded China. I hereby make an oath.” [2] At the same time, with the support and help of the Chinese military, two special bombs were prepared. That night, Koo Kim and Bong-Gil Yoon discussed every detail of the action plan once again to ensure that the action was infallible.

At 10 a.m., April 29, the military parade of “Tianchang Festival and Victory Celebration” was held in Hongkou Park. The parade ended at 11:30. Diplomatic envoys left. At that time, the celebration meeting came to a climax. Kawabata and Murai delivered speeches; Japanese people sang the national anthem. At that time, Bong-Gil Yoon threw a kettle bomb on the stage from the left rear of the congratulatory platform. With a loud bang, Japanese military and political dignitaries fell down on the stage, and the scene was in great disorder. “Kawabata of the militia group died on the spot; civil and military officials, such as the captain, the ambassador and the lieutenant general were seriously injured.” [1] This is the “Hongkou incident” which shocked the world.

Bong-Gil Yoon's heroic action not only inspired Chinese people's belief in anti-Japanese, but also promoted the independence of Korean. It was a turning point in the Korean independence movement.

After the incident, “japs arrested people everywhere like mad dogs...Therefore, I would like to

announce to the outside world that Koo Kim is responsible for the Tokyo incident and the Hongkou bomb incident... The announcement was drafted by Yan, translated by Mrs. Fei and published by Reuters, so that the whole world knows that the mastermind of the two events is Koo Kim, and the executors are Bong-Chang Lee and Bong-Gil Yoon.” [1]

“After the April 29 incident, the Japanese aggressors offered a reward of 200000 yuan for the first time; then the Japanese Foreign Ministry, the Korean Governor's Office and the Shanghai Garrison Headquarters jointly offered a reward of 600000 yuan for the capture of Koo Kim.” [1] Japanese military police and secret service organizations searched for Koo Kim in Shanghai and surrounding areas.

4. Fucheng Chu Actively Rescued Koo Kim

At that time, Zan Yi Park, who was also a member of the Chinese Nationalist Party and an important member of the Korean Provisional Government, met with relevant Chinese people to discuss the protection of Koo Kim. He chose his friend, Fucheng Chu, who had known him as early as the northern expedition period, hoping that Chu could provide protection for Koo Kim.

Park's choice was a deliberate move. Chu was a member of the Old League. He had participated in the northern expedition, and had been actively engaged in anti-Japanese and national salvation activities in Shanghai. Chu was the executive director of the Shanghai anti-Japanese National Salvation Association and the president of Shanghai Law School. He had a wide network of contacts and strong ability of social activities.

At this critical moment, Fucheng Chu risked the lives of the whole family and agreed to transfer Koo Kim from Shanghai to his hometown Jiaying, and made careful arrangements.

In his memoir, Koo Kim described the experience in detail. “Therefore, I lived in Jiaying, and changed my surname with Zhang, which is my grandmother's surname. I changed my name to Zhenqiu or Zhen. Jiaying is the hometown of Mr. Chu. Chu was once governor of Zhejiang Province; he was a gentleman with high moral integrity. His eldest son, Fengzhang, was once a student studying in the United States and served as the chief technician in Minfeng Paper Factory outside the east gate. Mr. Chu's house is located outside the South Gate of Jiaying. It is an old-fashioned house. It is not very spectacular, but it looks like the residence of a scholar bureaucrat. Mr. Chu used the room of his adopted son, Tongsheng Chen, as my dormitory. This is a semi western style house built by the lake. The structure is very exquisite. You can see the Xiulun Yarn Factory from the window, and the scenery is very beautiful. The only people who know my background are Chu and his wife, his son and daughter-in-law, as well as Tongsheng Chen and his wife. Language is the most difficult problem. Although I pretended to be Cantonese, I couldn't speak Chinese and became a mute.” [1]

5. Koo Kim Stayed in Haiyan, the Hometown of Fucheng Chu's Daughter-in-Law

Japanese plainclothes police came to Jiaying to search; Fucheng Chu decided to transfer Koo Kim to the parents' home of Jiarui Zhu, his daughter-in-law, for a temporary stay.

Koo Kim recorded this period of time in his autobiography. “Mrs. Chu's mother's home is in Haiyan; their summer villa is located more than 40 miles to the southwest of the county. Zhu is the second wife of Fengzhang Chu. She has just given birth to his first baby. Zhu is a young and beautiful lady. Mr. Chu only asked his wife to accompany me. We took a ship all day to Zhu's house in Haiyan County. “[1]

Koo Kim said in his book, *Autobiography of Bai Fan*, “after a night at the Zhu's house in Haiyan, I took a bus with Mrs. Chu to Luliyan the next day, and then climbed the mountain for five or six miles southwest from there. Mrs. Chu, wearing high-heeled shoes, climbed mountains in the hot days of July and August, and wiped sweat with a handkerchief from time to time. The maidservant of Mrs. Chu's family followed us with my food and other daily necessities.” After that, Koo Kim said affectionately, “I see this scene, and I really want to take this scene into a film and pass it on to generations to come... If our country is independent, who cannot be moved by Mrs. Chu's sincerity

and kindness? Although it can't be made into a film, it can still be passed down by words. So I write down the experience to commemorate it.” [1] It can be seen that Mr. Kim was sincerely grateful for the meticulous care of Fucheng Chu's family.

6. Koo Kim Travelled to Yanjiabang, and Lived in the House of Guirong Sun, the Grandson of Fucheng Chu

In February 1933, “I had been detected by the police. Police here knew about me; I felt unsafe, so I returned to Jiaxing.” [1] In *Autobiography of Bai Fan*, Koo Kim once wrote, “outside the South Gate of Jiaxing, walking along the canal for more than ten miles, there is a village called Yanjiabang. Tongsheng Chen has farmland there, and he has a good relationship with Yongbao Sun, a farmer in the village. I went there and live in Sun's house. At that time, I completely became an old man of countryside. When the whole family went to work in the fields, only a baby was left in the house. As soon as the baby cried, I carried him to the field to find his mother. At that time, his mother was very nervous and embarrassed.”[1] According to the document, Sun was a tenant of Chen Tongsheng, the adopted son of Chu, and he entrusted his son Guirong Sun to him. They were indeed very close.

When Koo Kim lived in Yanjiahong, he sailed out almost every day. In *Autobiography of Bai Fan*, he wrote, “after coming to Jiaxing, I sailed a boat to the South Lake almost every day. I also bought live chicken from villagers, and cooked the chicken on the boat. It was really delicious and comfortable to eat chicken while enjoying the scenery.”[1] It seems that Mr. Kim is very optimistic about life.

7. Koo Kim's “Live on Board” with Aibao Zhu, the Daughter of Chu's Housemaid

During the period of refuge in Jiaxing, Koo Kim spent a lot of time on the boat with Aibao Zhu, the daughter of Chu's housemaid. At that time, only a small number of people knew Koo Kim's identity. It was with their help that Mr. Kim spent the most difficult years of his life.

In *Autobiography of Bai Fan*, Koo Kim wrote, “Fengzhang Chu scolded me that I didn't know how to hide myself. He also advised me that one of his friends was a teacher in middle school. She was a widow of 30 years old. I could meet and negotiate with her. If we could get married and live together, I could hide my identity. I think it's easier for me to expose if I live with an intellectual woman. It's better to live with Aibao Zhu, the barge-woman who has little knowledge. I decided to stay in the boat all the time, sleeping by the lake outside the South Gate today, and sleeping on the canal bank outside the north gate tomorrow. I went ashore during the day.” [1] Aibao Zhu, Kim's favourite barge-woman, often sailed the boat to take Koo Kim out for activities. Koo Kim and Aibao Zhu lived a wandering life on the boat.

“During the day, I took Aibao Zhu's boat and travelled through the canal to enjoy the rural scenery, which became my daily course.” [1] Koo Kim recalled, “she only knew that I was Cantonese and served me for nearly five years. She and I had the affection unconsciously, and she really made a lot of contributions to taking care of me” [1]

The provisional government moved from Jiaxing to Nanjing. “I had to find a house in the Huaqing bridge. I paid Aibao Zhu's family 15 yuan a month. I asked her to come and live with me, pretending that I was an antique dealer, and I came from Hainan Island, Guangdong Province. If the police came to check the household registration, Aibao Zhu would come forward and explain everything. So I don't need to show myself... As the Sino-Japanese war spread to the south of the Yangtze River, the war situation in Shanghai became unfavourable to China. The Japanese air raids on Nanjing became more and more serious. The house of Huaqing bridge where I lived was also destroyed in the bombing. Aibao Zhu and I were saved from death, while a lot of neighbours were not that fortunate. I can see flames rising all over Nanjing, and the sky at night is dyed red.” [1]

“The situation in Nanjing was dangerous... We decided to flee to Changsha with cheap price of commodities... When I left Nanjing, I sent Aibao Zhu back to her hometown Jiaxing. To my deep regret, I only gave her 100 yuan for travel expenses... At that time, I thought that I would see her

later, so apart from the fare, I didn't give her enough money. What a pity.” [1] Since then, Koo Kim lost contact with Aibao Zhu.

There are not many records about Aibao Zhu in *Autobiography of Bai Fan*. But a few sentences outline the image of an ordinary peasant woman. Aibao Zhu was illiterate, only knowing that Fucheng Chu told her to take good care of this Guangdong guest surnamed Zhang. Aibao Zhu knew that Master Chu was a good man, so his friends must be good. She held the simple opinion and took care of Mr. Kim for five years. We can see how simple and kind the ordinary Chinese peasant women are. For this reason, the famous writer Niansheng Xia wrote the novel, *The Boat Moon*, which is the first Korean theme novel in contemporary China. It tells the story of Koo Kim and Aibao Zhu, who spent years wandering on the boat.

8. The Important “South Lake Conference” in the History of South Korea's Independence Movement

At the end of October 1935, 16 members of the “Provisional Government of the Republic of Korea” held a special meeting on a boat in South Lake. Koo Kim presided over the meeting. The 13th Provisional Government of the Republic of Korea was established at the meeting. As for the “South Lake Conference”, Koo Kim wrote in his memoir, “I discussed with representatives of Hangzhou, such as Shirong Li, Wanjiu Zhao, Pengjun Kim, Shaobi Yang, Bingzuo Song, and Lishi Che, about whether the provisional government should be maintained. We reached consensus. Then we went to Jiaxing and went aboard on a boat to the South Lake, together with Dongning Li, Gonggen An, Jinggen An, Hengji Yan and others who were already there. Three state councillors were added, namely Dongning Li, Wanjiu Zha and Koo Kim, as well as two state councillors, Bingzuo Song and Lixi Che. There were five people all together; in this way, the State Council meeting can be held.” [1]

We know that the “South Lake Conference” of the first National Congress of the Communist Party of China held on the red boat of South Lake has significance meanings for the Chinese revolution, but we do not know the significance of another “South Lake Conference” for Koo Kim and the independence movement of South Korea. Mr. Kim's position in the provisional government of the Republic of Korea was established at the “South Lake Conference”. The holding of the “South Lake Conference” established the leading position of Koo Kim in the provisional government, marking the provisional government entering the “Koo Kim period”. This conference is of great significance to the South Korean independence movement, and the South Lake Conference is a brilliant historical record. This kind of “coincidence” in the history of the national liberation movement of China and South Korea makes us think about the source of water and cherish the friendship between China and South Korea.

Fucheng Chu who rescued Koo Kim was also a well-known social figure at that time. His famous saying is, “I don't want to be a senior official in my life, but I want to do great things.” In his life, he did a lot of great things. For example, he adhered to the cooperation between the Nationalist Party and the Communist Party, and established the Jiusan Society. The rescue of Koo Kim, the leader of the Korean independence movement and chairman of the provisional government of the Republic of Korea, is only a part of his brilliant life: “serving the country for 50 years, without daring to pause”.

9. Conclusion

Now we look back on the glorious history; Fucheng Chu rescued the father of Korea, Koo Kim, regardless of the safety of his family. We deeply cherish the memory of Fucheng Chu, who fought for the cause of national liberation of China and South Korea. His historical contributions to the independence movement of South Korea will be forever recorded in history. As a researcher of Korean history, I would like to do my bit for the friendship between China and South Korea, and I hope the friendship between China and South Korea will last forever!

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