

# REVIEW

The Study of Communism and Communist Countries in Japan

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## The Kao Kang Affair and Sino-Soviet Relations

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Mineo Nakajima

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March 1977

# JAPAN INSTITUTE OF INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

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## REVIEW

Edited & Published by

JAPAN INSTITUTE OF INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

19th Mori Bldg., 40-2 Shiba-kotohira-cho, Minato-ku, Tokyo

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Printed in Japan

\$2.00

# The Kao Kang Affair and Sino-Soviet Relations

Mineo Nakajima\*

## 1. Introduction

It may be said that the cold war in Asia dates as far back as the Yalta Agreement made around the end of World War II<sup>1</sup>. But the outbreak of the Korean War soon after the birth of the People's Republic of China made the cold war literally hot and extremely increased the tension of the international environment in Northeast Asia; and the Korean War, while deepening the impression of East-West conflict in Asia against the backdrop of monolithic Sino-Soviet unity, also provided a vital historical background for the ultimate relationship of opposition which had already been growing potentially between the two countries<sup>2</sup>. The Kao Kang affair occurred at that very time, reportedly having evolved in Tungpei (or the Northeast—formerly, Manchuria), an area of traditional conflict between the interests of China and Russia. Although complete details of the incident are still enshrouded in mystery, it presents a number of vital questions when it is considered in the context of the then prevailing Sino-Soviet relations. This development, therefore, is a very important subject worth studying now for anyone interested in the historical process of Sino-Soviet conflict. Although it is a highly challenging task to attempt to reexamine the Kao Kang affair, which essentially represented the first intraparty conflict after the establishment of the People's Republic, and its main stage, Tungpei, in the historical context of Sino-Soviet relations, we can hope to accomplish it only on the basis of certain theoretical assumptions since available pertinent information is subject to various limitations. Fortunately, the recent publication of several important classified docu-

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<sup>1</sup> For a discussion of this hypothesis, see, for immediate reference, Mineo Nakajima's paper, "The Sino-Soviet Confrontation in Historical Perspective: The Cold War in Asia and Sino-Soviet Relations, 1948–1958" (Kyoto Symposium on "The Structure of the Cold War in Asia," December 1974).

<sup>2</sup> For details on this subject, see Mineo Nakajima, "The Korean War and China," *Kokusai Mondai*, May 1975.

ments and memoirs (by Mao Tse-tung, Khrushchev, Wang Ming, and others) provides a great deal of help in such an attempt<sup>3</sup>.

To begin with, let us assume that the Kao Kang affair may well have been a very important development with international implications—not only representing a power game between Kao's local power group attempting to turn Tungpei into an "independent kingdom" on the one hand and the Party leadership in Peking on the other, but also constituting a part of the struggle between Stalin and Mao or his Party leadership that had occurred in this traditional arena of Sino-Soviet rivalry, Tungpei. On this assumption we will look into the mysterious incident in the following sections and attempt to find some substantial evidence in support of this hypothesis.

## 2. The current significance of the Kao Kang affair

A "Resolution on the Kao Kang-Jao Shu-shih Anti-Party Alliance"<sup>4</sup> passed at the National Party Conference of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) on March 31, 1955, violently charged that a group of top Party men including Kao Kang and Jao Shu-shih had rebelled against the Party leadership in Peking and "attempted to make an independent kingdom" of Tungpei. By condemning them as "a completely unprincipled group of conspirators who have emerged in the current special environment of class struggle and are attempting to usurp the leadership of the Party and the State," the resolution hinted at a serious situation behind what is now known as the Kao Kang affair (Although it should be called the Kao Kang-Jao Shu-shih affair to be exact, it will be referred to simply as the Kao Kang affair for short in the rest of this paper.) At the same time, the

<sup>3</sup> Classified literature by Mao includes *Long Live Mao Tse-tung's Thought!* [*Mao Tse-tung Su-hsiang Wan-sui!*] (*Wan-sui*) which, as is well known, was distributed internally during the Cultural Revolution (four different editions printed under the same title are known), *Chairman Mao's Criticism for the Peng-Huang-Chang-Chou Antiparty Group* [*Mao Chu-hsi tui P'eng, Huang, Chang, Chou Fan-tang Chi-t'uan ti P'i-p'aa*n] and *Selected Writings of Chairman Mao* [*Mao Chu-hsi Wen-hsian*], all apparently printed as "reading for the Red Guards" for internal training purposes. As many studies have already indicated, these pieces of material may be considered to have sufficient value as sources of information. In addition, *Selected Works of Mao Tse-Tung*, Vol. 5, which was published in April 1977, refer much to the Kao-Jao anti-party alliance.

Khrushchev's memoir was published in the United States in two long series edited and translated by Strobe Talbott (*Khrushchev Remembers* and *Khrushchev Remembers: The Last Testament*) and became highly topical. Apart from the explanatory comments by the editor-translator and Edward Crankshaw, various textual critiques have demonstrated the great value of this memoir as a source of information full of reality, though involving some slips of memory, so far as China and Sino-Soviet relations are concerned. According to a Jiji Press report from New York dated February 7, 1974, the memoir is based on a tape-recorded dictation by Khrushchev himself, and "the voice print of the dictation was identified as Khrushchev's by experts."

Wang Ming's memoir (*Полвека КПК и Предательство Мао Цзэ-Дуна* [*The Half Century of the Chinese Communist Party and the Infidelity of Mao Tse-tung*]) and other informational materials the Soviet Union is beginning to publish eagerly of late under the present situation of Sino-Soviet tension can no doubt be important sources of information if used with the fact in mind that they have been published under such circumstances.

<sup>4</sup> National Party Conference of the CCP, "Resolution on the Kao Kang-Jao Shu-shih Anti-Party Alliance (passed on March 31, 1955), *Jen-min jih-pao* (*People's Daily*), April 5, 1955.

shocking *fact* of the “suicide” of Kao Kang who, as Vice President of the People’s Republic, had been an essential member of the top leadership of the new-born regime, was made public to the amazement of observers at home and abroad, and it was described as “an act by which Kao Kang expressed his refusal to bow to the Party and admitting his guilt and his intention of making a final rebuff against the Party.” The Kao Kang affair has been remembered as representing the first intraparty clash in the People’s Republic or the first purge recorded in the history of the Chinese Communist Party. But complete details of the incident have naturally been far from clear, and many mysteries still remain unsolved.

Nevertheless, general outlines of the incident are now becoming less obscure as a result of our own past efforts to shed light on the hidden historical process of the Sino-Soviet rivalry as well as the emergence of many new pieces of circumstantial evidence and the publication of a number of classified documents suggestive of the truth about that development. Because Kao Kang affair evolved in Tungpei, and because Tungpei and Sinkiang then were, in Mao’s own words, “two colonies<sup>5</sup>” under Soviet influence, observers have long been interested in special connections between Kao Kang, who maintained contacts with Stalin independently of the Party leadership in Peking, on the one hand and Stalin or the Party and Government of the Soviet Union on the other. Recently, many pieces of evidence strongly suggestive of such connections between the Kao Kang affair and Sino-Soviet relations lying in its background are beginning to come to light, making it essential for observers to reexamine the incident, which has come to assume a strongly current significance in the light of the present situation of the Sino-Soviet discord.

In the first place, it may well be felt that since Tungpei as well as Mongolia and Sinkiang was a site of Sino-Soviet conflict in economic interests and political influence, as is clear from our past research<sup>6</sup>, the Kao Kang affair, which sprang from Kao Kang’s attempt to turn Tungpei into an “independent kingdom”, cannot possibly have been unrelated to the then prevailing international circumstance of Sino-Soviet strife over Tungpei.

Secondly, it must be noted that whereas in China today, as is well known, Kao Kang and Jao Shu-shih are bitterly condemned as “anti-party, counter-revolutionary elements,” in the Soviet Union and the People’s Republic of Mongolia they have, particularly in recent years, been spoken highly of as “internationalists.” This fact clearly speaks of the current significance of the Kao Kang affair.

Thirdly, the recent publication of classified Mao’s literature and Khrushchev’s memoir has shed new light on various relevant circumstances, and gone a long way toward clarifying the background and outlines of the incident. For example, Mao Tse-tung is now known to have said: “Stalin was very fond of

<sup>5</sup> Referring to the Sino-Soviet Treaty of Friendship and Alliance signed in early 1950, Mao Tse-tung observed: “Then there were the two ‘colonies’—, that is Tungpei [the Northeast] and Sinkiang, where people of any third country were not allowed to reside. Now this has been rescinded.” Mao Tse-tung, “Talks at the Chengtu Conference” (March 1958), *Wan-sui* (August 1969).

<sup>6</sup> See Mineo Nakajima, “The Sino-Soviet Confrontation in Historical Perspective,” *op. cit.*

Kao Kang and made him a special present of a motor car. Kao Kang sent Stalin a congratulatory telegram every August 15<sup>7</sup>.” And Khrushchev recalled: “Much of this information about the mood in the Chinese Party came to us from Kao Kang, who was then the representative of the Chinese Politburo, Governor in Manchuria, where he’d been on close terms with our own representatives<sup>8</sup>.”

We will now consider how the Kao Kang affair with this background is currently viewed in various countries concerned.

Needless to say, the CCP has been consistent in loudly condemning the Kao-Jao group since the above-mentioned “Resolution on the Kao Kang-Jao Shu-shih Anti-Party Alliance,” identifying the incident with the first “class struggle” or “the first major struggle” after the foundation of the People’s Republic. The incident was taken up for discussion at the National Party Conference in March 1955, where Teng Hsiao-p’ing made a “Report on the Kao Kang-Jao Shu-shi Anti-Party Alliance,” thus playing the leading role in exposing and settling the affair. In his “Report on the Revision of the Constitution of the Communist Party of China” at the Eighth National Congress of the CCP called in September 1956—eleven years after the Seventh National Party Congress held in 1945—Teng stated: “The most important intraparty struggle in the period between the Seventh and Eighth National Party Congress was the one against the Anti-Party Alliance of Kao Kang and Jao Shu-shih<sup>9</sup>.” After the downfall of P’eng Te-huai and his group in 1959, the Party began to point out connections between the P’eng and Kao-Jao incidents; and then, after the outbreak of the Cultural Revolution, the Party has consistently been accusing Kao, P’eng, Liu Shao-chi and their followers en bloc.

A “Resolution on the Anti-Party Group Headed by P’eng Te-huai (Summary)” made on August 6, 1959<sup>10</sup>, at the Eighth Plenum of the Eighth Central Committee of the CCP claims that what was done by the P’eng group including P’eng Te-huai, Huang K’e-cheng, Chang Wen-t’ien, and Chou Hsiao-chou “is an extension of, and a development from, what was done by the Anti-Party Alliance of Kao Kang and Jao Shu-shih. It has already been made clear that P’eng Te-huai and Huang K’e-cheng had long been in alliance with Kao Kang against the Party, and constituted important members of that alliance. Chang Wen-t’ien also participated in Kao Kang’s schismatic activities<sup>11</sup>.”

<sup>7</sup> Mao Tse-tung, “Talks at the Chengtu Conference,” *op. cit.*

<sup>8</sup> Strobe Talbott (transl. & ed.), *Khrushchev Remembers: The Last Testament*, Little, Brown & Co., 1974, p. 243.

<sup>9</sup> Teng Hsiao-p’ing, “Report on the Revision of the Constitution of the Communist Party of China” (at the Eighth National Party Congress of the CCP on September 16, 1956), *The Constitution of the Communist Party of China—Report on the Revision of the Party Constitution*, Peking, Jen-min Chu-pan shê, 1956, p. 55.

<sup>10</sup> “Resolution on the Anti-Party Group Headed by P’eng Ten-huai at the Eighth Plenum of the Eighth Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party (Summary)” (August 16, 1959), *Jen-min jih-pao*, August 16, 1967. It should be noted that the “Summary” (extracts) of this resolution was made public eight years after its adoption—that is, when the Cultural Revolution was at its height.

<sup>11</sup> It is not clear specifically what connections existed between P’eng Teh-huai’s group and Kao Kang’s, but according to a Red Guard documents that appeared during the Cultural Revolution, “After the triumph of the ‘Resist America Aid Korea’ movement, P’eng the Traitor

*Jen-min jih-pao* (*People's Daily*) editorial titled "Long Live Mao Tse-tung's Thought!" published on the Forty-fifth Anniversary of the CCP, immediately before the outbreak of the Cultural Revolution, reads: "During the sixteen years following the foundation of the People's Republic, the Marxist-Leninist leadership at the Party Headquarters led by Comrade Mao Tse-tung has experienced three major struggles with the anti-party revisionist groups, the first being the struggle against the Anti-Party Alliance of Kao Kang and Jao Shu-shih . . . and this Anti-Party Alliance was thoroughly exposed and smashed at the Fourth Plenum of the Seventh Central Committee of the Party and at the National Party Conference in 1955<sup>12</sup>."

At the Ninth National Congress of the CCP held in April 1969, Lin Piao stressed in his Political Report: "The history of the Chinese Communist Party is at once the history of struggles between the Marxist-Leninist policy line of Chairman Mao on the one hand and the opportunist policy lines of the right wing and 'left' wing inside the Party on the other. Under Chairman Mao's leadership, we have beaten the right-wing opportunism of Ch'en Tu-hsiu, the 'left-wing' opportunism of Ch'ü Ch'iu-pai and Li Li-san, the initially 'left-wing' and later right-wing opportunism of Wang Ming, the schism of Chang Kuo-tao in the Red Army, the right-wing opportunist anti-party alliance of P'eng Te-huai, Kao Kang, Jao Shu-shih and their followers, and finally, through a long struggle, smashed the anti-party revisionism of Liu Shao-chi<sup>13</sup>."

Subsequently, on the semicentennial of the CCP in July 1971, *Jen-min jih pao*, *Hung ch'i* (*Red Flag*) and *Chieh-fang jih-pao* (*Liberation Daily*) published a joint editorial titled "In Commemoration of the Semicentennial of the Chinese Communist Party". Reviewing the half-century history of intraparty struggles and extolling the Mao-Lin regime, the editorial emphasized Liu Shao-ch'i's involvement by asserting: "The socialist revolution is a struggle for burying capitalism. It has been cheered by the people, but suffered frantic subversion by Liu Shao-ch'i and his group. P'eng Te-huai, Kao Kang, Jao Shu-shih and their followers formed an anti-party alliance to split the national leadership and overthrow the proletarian dictatorship<sup>14</sup>."

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made the irresponsible remark: 'The success of the movement should be credited to two pock-marked men,' half of it to Kang the Pockmarked, and the other half to Hung the Pockmarked (Hung Hsueh-chih) [Hung, who fell due to involvement in the P'eng Te-huai affair, was Director of General Rear Service Department of the People's Liberation Army and Alternate Member of the CCP Central Committee—quoter's note]. In 1951, P'eng the Traitor was very much dissatisfied with the operations of Chief-of-Staff Nieh and his General Staff, and demanded through certain persons that the central leadership and the Chairman have Kao Kang operate in the General Staff" (Ching kangshan Crops, Ch'inghua University, *Down with the Big Plotter, Big Crook, Big Warlord P'eng Te-huai!—A Collection of Literature on P'eng Te-huai*, November 1967; in Ting Wang ed., *Collected Literature on the Cultural Revolution in Communist China*, Vol. III, "Collected Literature Specifically on the P'eng Te-huai Issue," Hong Kong, Ming pao Monthly Press, 1969).

<sup>12</sup> *Jen-min jih-pao*, July 1, 1966.

<sup>13</sup> Lin Piao, "Report to the Ninth National Congress of the Communist Party of China" (made on April 1, 1969; distributed on April 14, 1969), *Jen-min jih-pao*, April 28, 1969.

<sup>14</sup> *Jen-min jih-pao*, July 1, 1971.

These developments were followed by the Lin Piao crisis in September 1971. Lin was thoroughly condemned at the Tenth National Party Congress in August 1973, where Chou En-lai in his Political Report severely attacked “Lin Piao’s anti-party group” and observed: “The intraparty struggle between the two policy lines will continue to exist for a long time to come, surfacing repeatedly ten, twenty, and thirty times in the future with the emergence of men like Lin Piao—men like Wang Ming, Liu Shao-chi, P’eng Te-huai, and Kao Kang<sup>15</sup>.”

Through these very curious turns and twists, the Kao Kang group has consistently been accused bitterly in the CCP.

In contrast to such evaluation of the Kao Kang affair in China, the Soviets, who began to talk eagerly about it with the intensification of their dispute with the Chinese, have been speaking rather boldly in favor of Kao’s position.

In the following we will review a few Soviet scholars’ opinions which seem to clearly reflect this Soviet attitude.

O. B. Borisov, who is familiar with the history of Sino-Soviet relations, apparently thinks highly of Kao Kang’s group, saying: “The significance and role of the Soviet Union ensuring the complete preparedness of the revolutionary base [Manchuria—quoter’s note] for a decisive battle was well understood by the internationalist Communists, especially those of the Party organization in Manchuria. That is why in numerous campaigns the Maoists oppressed most of the internationalist Communists who had undergone the trial of fighting with the Party in Manchuria<sup>16</sup>.” V. I. Grunin, of the Institute of the Far East, the Soviet Academy of Sciences, who has often discussed the Kao Kang affair, agrees with Borisov in identifying Kao’s group with the internationalists, saying: “By making up the ‘Kao Kang affair,’ Mao Tse-tung and his men attempted to check the influence of the proletarian internationalist forces in the Party and intimidate the Party leaders, thus making ready the political and organizational preconditions for a reexamination of the general policy line of the Party and for putting China on the road of development ‘peculiar’ to the Maoists<sup>17</sup>.” Grunin also argues: “This incident represented the first full-scale political action of the Maoists against the sound internationalist forces in the Party,” and referring to Kao Kang himself, Grunin recalls: “Kao Kang closely cooperated with the Soviet political, economic, military, and technical experts operating devotedly in Tungpei. Holding high positions, he participated direct in serious efforts for building up scientific socialism and strengthening friendly relations between China and the Soviet Union<sup>18</sup>.” Thus endorsing the above-mentioned Khrushchev recollection and speaking for Kao, Grunin hints at Kao’s significant position in the history of Sino-Soviet relations.

<sup>15</sup> Chou En-lai, “Report to the Tenth National Congress of the Communist Party of China” (made on August 24, 1973; distributed on August 28, 1973), *Jen-min jih-pao*, September 1, 1973.

<sup>16</sup> O. B. Borisov, “The Soviet Union and Manchuria, the Base for the Chinese Revolution,” *Kyoku-to no Shomondai (Problems of the Far East)*, Vol. V, No. 1, March 1976.

<sup>17</sup> V. I. Grunin, “The Struggle between Two Policy Lines in the Chinese Communist Party,” *Kyoku-to no Shomondai*, Vol. III, No. 4, December 1974.

<sup>18</sup> V. I. Grunin, “The Truth about the Kao Kang-Jao Shu-shih Affair,” *Shu-kan Chugoku Jijyo Kenkyu (Weekly Chinese Affairs Research)*, March 18, 1974.

The same way of thinking identifying Kao as an “internationalist” despite his condemnation as an anti-party element by the Party leadership in Peking has been expressed also by the People’s Republic of Mongolia. The Mongolians, who charge that the Chinese are ruling Inner Mongolia as part of their territory, often refer to a speech titled “The Road to the Liberation of Inner Mongolia and the Party’s Policy for Nationalities<sup>19</sup>” which Kao made on August 3, 1948, with reference to Party activities in Inner Mongolia. The Mongolians believe that in this speech Kao spoke of the “formation of a unified autonomous regime in Inner Mongolia” and pointed toward something different from a CCP-led Government of Inner Mongolia, and consider that, despite this attitude of Kao Kang,” soon later Mao Tse-tung and his petty bourgeois nationalists, who had assumed a ruling position in the Chinese Communist Party” overthrew Kao Kang, who was “a true internationalist.<sup>20</sup>”

Reviewing these various evaluations of Kao Kang and his group in the light of current Sino-Soviet relations, we can see more clearly what the Kao Kang affair really means today.

### 3. The exposure of the “Anti-Party Alliance” and its formation

The Kao Kang affair was reportedly exposed around the time of the Fourth Plenum of the Seventh Central Committee of the CCP in February 1954<sup>21</sup>, which took place in Peking on February 6 to 10, 1954, with “the question of Party unity” as the main subject on the agenda. Liu Shao-ch’i, “on behalf of the Central Politburo of the Party and Comrade Mao Tse-tung,” delivered a Central Politburo

<sup>19</sup> Kao Kang, “The Road to the Liberation of Inner Mongolia and the Party’s Policy for Nationalities—A Speech at a Conference of Inner Mongolian Leaders” (August 3, 1948), *Tung-pei jih-pao (Northeast Daily)*, December 12, 1948 (*Ch’ün chung (The Masses)*, Vol. II, No. 48). In this speech Kao Kang said, to be exact: “After the liberation of the entire country, a ‘Union of Democratic Republics of China’ (see Chairman Mao’s ‘On Coalition Government’) will be organized by the various groups of nationalities in China by their free will and on the principle of democracy, and an autonomous Government of Inner Mongolia will be a major component within the borders of that Union,” thus falling back on Mao’s view at the time of his “On Coalition Government” and placing an autonomous Government of Inner Mongolia within the framework of a federal system. This speech, in which Kao Kang often referred to the support of the Soviet Union and Outer Mongolia for Inner Mongolia, attracted much attention as reflecting a “Kao Kang brand of internationalism,” according to some sources. That is, Stalin and the Cominform were then bitterly criticizing Tito of Yugoslavia as a nationalist, and Mao Tse-tung himself was vulnerable to the same kind of criticism, Kao Kang’s “internationalist” attitude with which he frequently referred to the support of the Soviet Union and Outer Mongolia for Inner Mongolia and apparently suggested that under the Soviet influence Inner Mongolia should separate from China and follow the same course as Mongolia’s was made much of; as a result, the speech found its way into the famous pamphlet, “Internationalism and Nationalism,” and for some time was one of the musts for the Chinese Communists (T’ien Ch’i, “All about the Kao-Jao Anti-Party Alliance,” in Shih Chia-lin ed., *Various Views on the Kao-Jao Affair in Communist China*, Hong Kong, Tzu-yu Chu-pan shê (Freedom Press), 1955).

<sup>20</sup> D. Bazargarid, “Han Chauvinism and the Fate of Inner Mongolia,” *Kyoku-to no Shomon-dai*, Vol. III, No. 2 (June 1974).

<sup>21</sup> “Resolution on the Kao Kang-Jao Shu-shih Anti-Party Alliance,” *op. cit.*

report, and the committee unanimously adopted a “Resolution on the Strengthening of Party Unity”. This resolution pointed out: “Some leaders of the Party . . . are going so far as to regard the areas or agencies under their charge as their private possessions or independent kingdoms”; the resolution also said: “Against such elements, who intentionally destroy the unity of the Party and resist the Party, stubbornly refuse to correct their mistakes, or even engage in sectional, schismatic, or otherwise harmful activities in the Party, the Party will never fail to launch merciless struggles, meeting out severe punishment to them, and in some cases ousting them from the Party whenever necessary<sup>22</sup>,” thus hinting at certain serious aspects of the situation. The resolution reportedly was based on a proposal made by Mao Tse-tung at a meeting of the Central Politburo of the Party on December 24, 1953, for a “Resolution on the Strengthening of Party Unity<sup>23</sup>.” It is believed, therefore, that it is in early 1954 that real action was taken against Kao Kang, Jao Shu-shih and their followers, denying them freedom of action and suspending them from their offices<sup>24</sup>. That is, they were exposed between late January and early February 1954, and the incident then moved into the second phase—one for purging. After the resolution at the Fourth Plenum of the Central Committee, the above-mentioned “Resolution on the Kao Kan-Jao Shu-shih Anti-Party Alliance” sponsored by Teng Hsiao-p’ing was adopted at the National Party Conference on March 31, 1955, and subsequently the final settlement of the affair including the “suicide<sup>25</sup>” of Kao Kang was made public.

<sup>22</sup> “Bulletin of the Fourth Plenum of the Seventh Central Committee of the Communist Party of China,” *Jen-min jih-pao*, February 18, 1954.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>24</sup> Kao Kang’s last public appearance was at the Rally in Commemoration of Thirtieth Anniversary of Lenin’s Passing held at Huaijentang in Peking on January 20, 1954. For a detailed description of the Fourth Plenum of the Central Committee and related developments preceding and following it, see Hsu Kwan-san, “All about ‘the Kao-Jao Anti-Party Alliance’,” Last Part, *Ming pao Monthly*, Hong Kong, March 1966.

<sup>25</sup> Referring to the highly mysterious “suicide” of Kao Kang, the CCP officially announced: “Kao Kang not only refused to bow to the Party and admit his guilt, but even made his last expression of rebellion against the Party by killing himself” (“Resolution on the Kao Kan-Jao Shu-shih Anti-Party Alliance,” *op. cit.*). This official statement has given rise to a variety of suspicions and speculations. Wang Ming in particular believes that Mao Tse-tung “after killing him, had his ‘suicide’ and ‘expulsion’ from the Party officially announced” (Ван Мин, Полвека КПК и Предательство Мао Цзэ-дуна, Издательство Полигцеской Литературы, Москва, 1975, стр. 195-196.); and Khrushchev says, “I doubt very much that Kao Kang committed suicide. Most probably Mao had him strangled or poisoned” (Strobe Talbott, *Khrushchev Remembers: The Last Testament*, *op. cit.*, p. 244). On the other hand, Hsiang Te, who was then in Shanghai, personally listened to a report by Ch’en Yi, Second Secretary of the Huatung Bureau at the Party Headquarters (then concurrently Mayor of Shanghai) on the series of developments concerning the Kao-Jao incident, and prepared a detailed memo of its contents, in which he quotes Ch’en Yi as saying that Kao Kang, stubbornly refusing to be questioned by the Central Politburo of the Party, took out a pistol during a meeting and declared: “If you Comrades distrusts me so much, I’ll kill myself before you!” and was about to shoot himself when a Politburo Member close by him narrowly stopped him, thus frustrating his attempt; and adds further that “according to information from sources in the Party, Kao Kang, after his first attempt at suicide, which was unsuccessful, made another attempt in 1956, this time succeeding in killing himself” (Hsiang Te, “Jao Shu-shih’s ‘Crime’: The Truth about ‘the Kao-Jao Anti-Party Alliance’,” *The Ming pao Monthly*, May 1967). Hsiang Te’s memo disagrees with the official announcement of the CCP Headquarters in dating Kao’s final death,

Meanwhile, a period of about one year was allowed for examinations and cooling-off, and the case was closed without causing excessive perturbation in the Party.

Mao Tse-tung was absent from the Fourth Plenum of the Central Committee presided over by Liu Shao-ch'i. Here again we should carefully look into what the Soviets apparently believe, including their analysis of this particular fact: Mao's absence. V. I. Grunin writes<sup>26</sup>:

At the Fourth Plenum of the Central Committee in February 1954, Kao Kang and Jao Shu-shih were condemned, on the basis of a Liu Shao-ch'i report prepared at Mao's instructions, as 'enemy agents' who had 'attempted to cause division and schism' in the Party 'and create a number of sectional groups' there. It was soon found that this 'enemy' meant the Soviet Union. The Maoists called Kao Kang 'a Soviet agent'<sup>27</sup>, and charged that he had tried to 'split' the Party . . . . .

At the Fourth Plenum, Mao chose to let Liu Shao-ch'i take care of Kao Kang rather than to take action himself. But Liu did not take such rough steps as Mao desired, and the Central Committee merely gave a 'grave warning' to Kao.

At the 1955 National Party Conference of the CCP, the 'Kao Kang affair' was committed to Teng Hsiao-p'ing, Secretary of the Central Committee. He did very well in performing his mission. He also sentenced Kao to political death. This played an important role in determining Teng's subsequent political career. Soon he was elected to the Politburo of the Central Committee by cooptation, and a little more than a year later he was promoted to General Secretary of the Central Committee. What he achieved in the 'Kao Kang affair' presumably went a long way toward his pardon after the 'Cultural Revolution'.

This statement sounds very real, and seems to sharply reflect the general outline of the Kao Kang affair. Also, as will be shown later, it appears to go very far toward revealing the truth about the incident with respect to the position of Mao Tse-tung that compelled him to leave Kao Kang's condemnation to Liu Shao-ch'i, and later to Teng Hsiao-p'ing—for Kao apparently had been on intimate terms with Mao—and also with respect to Liu's role at the Fourth Plenum of the Central Committee which, after the Cultural Revolution, caused him to be accused of "anti-party revisionism" for the reason that his attitude had lacked consistency in dealing with the Kao Kang affair and other related developments.

It should not be overlooked in this connection that the background against which the Kao Kang affair was exposed and consolidation of Party unity called

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saying it occurred in 1956, but describes with much reality the circumstances around Kao's "suicide"; considering that suicide in China is often an act of strong protest, it seems more reasonable to imagine that he was not murdered after all but killed himself.

<sup>26</sup> "The Truth about the 'Kao Kang-Jao Shu-shih Affair,'" *op. cit.*

<sup>27</sup> The term "Soviet agent" is reminiscent of a recollection by Khrushchev, who said with reference to a reception in Peking: "a lot of young people who got drunk and began making angry remarks to our diplomats about 'your man Kao Kang.' At the time, Kao Kang was still in the [Chinese] Politburo, but we knew he was already on ice" (Strobe Talbott, *Khrushchev Remembers: The Last Testament*, *op. cit.*, p. 244. Since *The Last Testament* has not been released in the Soviet Union, the fact that it agrees well with the present official view of the Soviet authorities adds greatly to the credibility and reality of Khrushchev's story, and increases its value as historical evidence.

for included the impact and consequences of the Beria purge that had occurred in the Soviet Union following Stalin's death. Exposed earlier, Beria was formally convicted by the Supreme Court in Moscow on December 24, 1953, the day Mao Tse-tung made the above proposal to the Central Politburo of the Party.

We will now look into the personal histories in the Party of Kao Kang and Jao Shu-shih. Born in 1892 at Hengshan, Shensi Province<sup>28</sup>, Kao Kang, after the Nationalist-Communist dissension in 1927, launched a peasant movement in northern Shensi with Liu Chih-tan, who led the Red Army units in Shensi. Later, during the Long March of the main forces of the Red Army, Kao was quick to organize a soviet in northern Shensi, thus establishing a basis for the Party organization and Red Army forces (26th Red Army) in Shensi. Operating in and around the remote Shensi-Kansu-Ninghsia (Shen-Kan-Ning) Border Region, Kao firmly held his bases at Wuch'ichên, Wayaopao and elsewhere, thus greatly contributing to the successful Red Army entry there following the Long March. In 1936 he went to Moscow, and was elected to the Central Committee of the Party at the Seventh National Congress of the CCP. During the civil war with the Nationalists following the hostilities with Japan, he rendered various distinguished services as head of the Tungpei (Northeast—Manchuria) Bureau and Hsipei (Northwest) Bureau at the Party Headquarters<sup>29</sup>, in particular leading the movement for the liberation of Tungpei. In 1949 he became First Secretary of the Party's Tungpei Bureau and Chairman of the Northeast People's Government. When the People's Republic of China came into being, he was one of the three Vice-Chairmen representing the CCP, the other two being Chu Te and Liu Shao-ch'i, among the six Vice-Chairmen of the Central People's Government Council in Peking. Soon he was First Secretary of the Party's Northeast Bureau, Chairman of the Northeast Administrative Committee, and Commander/Commissar of the Northeast Military Region all in one, thus taking control of all three powers in Tungpei—Party, administrative, and military. At the Party Headquarters he was also Vice-Chairman of the People's Revolutionary Military Committee, was elected to the Party Politburo<sup>30</sup>, and in November 1952 became Head of the State Planning Commission. Kao's success at that time was indeed remarkable, and his statements and actions were often played up in the *Jen-min jih-pao*. In

<sup>28</sup> Kao Kang's birth has been dated variously otherwise, for example, 1891, 1902 and 1905.

<sup>29</sup> Mao Tse-tung once made highly of such achievements of Kao Kang's. In a note attached by the Committee for the Publication of Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung at the CCP Headquarters to the "Resolution on Some Historical Issues" contained in Volume III of *Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung*, Mao is quoted as saying that the "leftist" aberrations of Chu Li-chih, Kuo Hung-tao and others at the northern Shensi base were overcome by "Liu Chih-tan, Kao Kang and other Comrades who, following the right policy, had created a base for the Red Army and the Revolution in northern Shensi." "Resolution on Some Historical Issues" (April 20, 1945), *Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung*, Vol. III, Peking, Jen-min Chu-pan shê, 1953, p. 1,000. This "Resolution on Some Historical Issues" has been excluded from the new editions of *Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung* put out since the Cultural Revolution.

<sup>30</sup> Kao Kang's appointment to the Central Politburo of the Party is generally dated 1952, but it is not clear at which of the meetings between the Third Plenum of the Seventh Central Committee of the CCP in June 1950 and the meeting of the Central Politburo in December 1953 that appointment was decided upon.

considering his career, we should take note of the fact that he was viewed as a native Communist based in northern Shensi, remembering that the Party and Red Army functionaries there always tended to be independent of or resistant to the Party leadership, declaring: “The 26th Legion of the Red Army could become powerful without perishing during the period of ‘flight’ and ‘wandering’ only through fights with the leaders and representatives dispatched from the Headquarters and by rejecting Headquarters instructions and decisions<sup>31</sup>.”

Jao Shu-shih was born in 1901 at Lin Ch’uan, Kiangsi Province<sup>32</sup>. After graduating from Shanghai University, he studied in the U.S., Britain, France, and the Soviet Union—an intellectual Communist. After returning home, he entered Yen-an, and during the war with Japan served under Liu Shao-ch’i successively as Chief of Propaganda Department of the Huachung (Central China) Bureau and as Political Commissar of the New Fourth Army. After the war he became Political Commissar of the East China People’s Liberation Army, and during the liberation of Shanghai he served as Political Commissar of the Third Field Army under the command of General Ch’en Yi. After the foundation of the People’s Republic, he became First Secretary of the Huatung (East China) Bureau of the Party in Peking and Chairman of Administrative Committee in Huatung and in August 1952 began to serve concurrently as Director of Organization Department at the Party Headquarters<sup>33</sup>. He was indeed a very important figure in the Party (serving on the Central Committee). At the same time he was on the State Planning Commission chaired by Kao Kang. As this background suggests, Jao was a leader particularly based in East China and Tungpei. In post-liberation Shanghai, he was often referred to as “King of Huatung”.

Now, we have to consider how the “Kao-Jao Anti-Party Alliance” came into being, and what objectives it had. First, we will see what the official accusation published by the CCP has to say in this regard:

Since 1949 Kao Kang has been carrying on conspiratorial activities for the purpose of seizing the leadership of the Party and the State . . . . . He attempted to make the Northeast area the independent kingdom of Kao Kang. Kao Kang’s anti-party activities became even more outrageous after his transfer to work in the central organs in 1953. He advocated an extremely haphazard sort of ‘theory’, arguing that our Party consisted of two parts—a ‘Party in the bases and the Army’ and a ‘Party in the white areas’, that the Party was created by the Army, that he himself represented the ‘Party in the bases and the Army’ and naturally should hold the main powers of it, that consequently the Party Headquarters and the Government should all be reorganized in accordance with his plans, and that for the moment he should be appointed General Secretary or Vice-Chairman at the Party Headquarters and concurrently assume the Premiership of the State Council . . . . .

<sup>31</sup> Hsu Kuan-san, “All about ‘the Kao-Jao Anti-Party Alliance’,” First Part, *The Ming pao Monthly*, Hong Kong, February 1966.

<sup>32</sup> Some believe that he was born at Nanchang in 1905 (Cf. *Who’s Who in Communist China*, Union Research Institute, Hong Kong, 1966).

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.* It is commonly believed, however, that he became Director of Organization Department at the Party Headquarters in 1953. Details are unknown.

Jao Shu-shih is Kao Kang's main ally in his conspiratorial antiparty activities . . . . In the ten years between 1943 and 1953, Jao Shu-shih on many occasions resorted to shameless deceit in the Party to seize power . . . . After his transfer to the Central Committee in 1953, he thought that Kao Kang was on the point of success in his activities to seize power in the Central Committee. Therefore, he formed an anti-party alliance with Kao Kang and used his office as Director of the Organization Department of the Central Committee to start a struggle aimed at opposing leading members of the Central Committee and actively carried out activities to split the Party . . . .

The enemy is, as a matter of course, trying every means to destroy our Party, and anchors its greatest hope on a split and degenerative changes in the Chinese Communist Party . . . . It is under these circumstances that Kao Kang, Jao Shu-shih and their followers formed their anti-party alliance, made advances to the Central Committee of the Party, beginning with the Central Politburo, and attempted to overthrow the long-tried central Party leadership headed by Comrade Mao Tse-tung and thereby facilitate their seizure of the leadership of the Party and the State . . . . They only believed in seizing the supreme power of the Party and the State<sup>34</sup>.

This description of the case, though taken from an official accusation published by the CCP, nevertheless seems to reflect the outlines of the incident in realistic way. It should be noted in this connection, however, that although the "Resolution on the Kao Kang-Jao Shu-shih Anti-Party Alliance" adopted at the National Conference of the CCP was thus made public, none of the contents of the important Teng Hsiao-p'ing report ostensibly "made by Comrade Ten Hsiano-p'ing, Member of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party, on behalf of the Central Committee<sup>35</sup>" have been revealed yet. Here again we find a heavy curtain of mystery shielding the Kao Kang affair from our view. In Shanghai, Jao's home territory, Mayor Ch'en Yi<sup>36</sup> (also Second Secretary of the East China Bureau at the Party Headquarters, the First Secretary being Jao Shu-shih) took the lead in settling the aftermaths of the affair, and made a report to the representatives of the democratic parties and groups in a small conference room of the Shanghai Municipal Committee of the Party. Hsiang Te who had operated there as an intellectual of the democratic parties before the liberation, listened to the report and reproduced it in a memo<sup>37</sup>. Considering the circumstances then prevailing, the Ch'en Yi report as reproduced by Hsiang Te seems to reflect the contents of the Teng Hsiao-p'ing report rather faithfully. In the

<sup>34</sup> "Resolution on the Kao Kang-Jao Shu-shih Anti-Party Alliance," *op. cit.*

<sup>35</sup> Central Committee of the CCP, "Bulletin of the National Conference of the Communist Party of China," *Jen-min jih-pao*, April 4, 1955.

<sup>36</sup> Incidentally, the Mayor of Shanghai at that time was Ch'en Yi, who had directed the liberation of the city as Commander of the Third Field Army (its Political Commissar being Jao Shu-shih), and was later known as Foreign Minister of China. Being Second Secretary of the Huatung Bureau at the Party Headquarters and concurrently First Secretary of the Municipal Party Committee of Shanghai, Ch'en Yi was subordinate to Jao Shu-shih in the Party's organizational chart, and superior to P'an Han-nien (Third Secretary of the Municipal Party Committee of Shanghai), who was accused simultaneously with Jao.

<sup>37</sup> Hsiang Te, "The Truth about 'the Kao-Jao anti-Party Alliance' ", *The Ming pao Monthly*, April 1967; and "Jao Shu-shih's 'Crime': The Truth about 'the Kao-Jao Anti-Party Alliance,'" *op. cit.*

first place, the report charged that Kao Kang, with his belief in “military control of the Party,” always thought of “the Army and territory first” as the old warlords had done, and declared proudly that he was a man with a military background, thus largely deviating from the principle of “Party control of the Army.” Secondly, it charged that Kao had “split the Party”—that he did not respect Chairman Mao Tse-tung, but was so proud of his own petty education in Moscow that he often resisted the Party Headquarters and declared: “I am an international Communist whereas Mao Tse-tung and his group are native Communists of Ching kangshan.” Thirdly, it charged that Kao had “attempted to make Tungpei a special region and usurp the leadership of the Party Headquarters”. In this respect, the report generally concurred with the above-mentioned “resolution.” The fourth charge was that Kao had “been anxious for prestige and seriously alienated from the masses.” This charge was an attack on his heavy reliance on a closed group of immediate aides and his attitude of looking down on the masses. The fifth charge concerned his “corruption and moral degradation in private life”. The report exposed Kao’s affairs with women, and pointed out in particular that “several female secretaries in Kao Kang’s public office were compelled to serve as “his outside mistresses.”

Referring to Jao Shu-shih, the report charged in the first place that he had “abused his official powers and spread his personal influence,” mentioning several examples. Secondly, it charged that Jao had “propagated defeatist thoughts,” and described how he had feared Chiang Kai-shek’s group and American imperialism since he was Political Commissar of the New Fourth Army and through the post-war periods of the civil fighting and the Korean hostilities. Thirdly, the report charged Jao with “bourgeois thinking,” saying that having studied in the U.S., he was obsessed with the idea of “America first”, and that he was bourgeois in every way and even kept his daughter in Paris at that very moment. The report further charged that after becoming Director of Organization Department at the Party Headquarters in 1953, he had not heeded opportunities for reform offered by the Party leadership, but utilized his official position to form an anti-party alliance with Kao Kang.

The Ch’en Yi report as reproduced in Hsiang Te’s memo sounds very real when it is considered in connection with various developments concerning the subsequent P’eng Te-huai purge<sup>38</sup>. The Hsiang Te memo, therefore, may be considered fairly reliable, and if studied together with the above-mentioned “resolution,” may give us a relatively accurate picture of the situation then prevailing.

Apart from whether “the enemy” in the statement in the resolution: “The enemy is, as a matter of course, trying every means to destroy our Party, and anchors its greatest hope on a split and degenerative changes in the Chinese Communist Party,” includes the Soviet Union in the present case, we cannot help noting that the description in the “resolution” that Kao Kang asked for the Premiership of the State Council as well as the post of Party General Secretary

<sup>38</sup> For literature on the Peng Te-huai affair, see, for immediate reference, Ting Wang ed., *op. cit.*

or Vice-Chairman<sup>39</sup> has something in common with the “conspiracy” charge made against Lin Piao after his downfall in September 1971<sup>40</sup>. Since both Kao Kang and Jao Shu-shih had been “the top leaders in the two major industrial regions in China—Tungpei and Huatung<sup>41</sup>” as well as top-ranking men in the CCP, the situation was extremely serious.

After the exposure of this highly significant incident, meetings for the study of Fourth Plenum of the Central Committee literature were held at the various Regional Bureaus at the Party Headquarters. In June 1954, the six Major Administrative Region Governments were abolished, and in the subsequent several months the Regional Bureaus in Peking, which were on a par with the Party Headquarters, went out one by one. An end was thus put to decentralization. Purged through this process were the following senior leaders: Chang Hsiu-shan (Second Secretary and Chief of the Secretariat, Tungpei Bureau; Head, Inspection Committee, People’s Government of Tungpei), Chang Ming-yuan (Third Secretary, Tungpei Bureau; Vice-Chairman, Tungpei Administrative Committee), Ch’en Po-ts’un (Deputy Director of Organization Department, Tungpei Bureau; concurrently, Deputy-Head, Inspection Committee, People’s Government of Tungpei), Kuo Feng (Deputy Director of Organization Department, Tungpei Bureau; concurrently, Director of Personnel Affairs, People’s Government of Tungpei), Chao Te-tsun (Director of Agrarian Operations Department, Tungpei Bureau), and Ma Hung (Deputy Chief of the Secretariat, Tungpei Bureau; Member, State Planning Commission), these six being Kao Kang’s men; P’an Han-nien (Third Secretary, Municipal Party Committee of Shanghai; concurrently, First Deputy Mayor), and Hsiang Ming (First Secretary, Shangtung Branch Bureau; concurrently, First Vice-Chairman, People’s Government of Shantung), these two being Jao Shu-shih’s followers. In addition, innumerable middle and lower leaders of the Tungpei and Huatung Bureaus were said to have been involved in the affair.

<sup>39</sup> According to the Ch’en Yi report as reproduced in Hsiang Te’s above-mentioned memo, when the Head of State and the Premier of the State Council were to be elected by the First National People’s Congress in August 1954, the Party leadership specifically wanted to know the opinion of Kao Kang, who replied; “I am not one to say anything about such positions . . . . If the Party leadership wants to consult me, I will tell you frankly. I only wish to be Vice-Chairman and concurrently Premier of the State Council . . . .” (“The Truth about ‘the Kao-Jao Anti-Party Alliance,’” *op. cit.*). If this story is correct, such remarks about such appointments from the mouth of a man like Kao Kang, who had already been viewed as questionable around the time of the Fourth Plenum of the Central Committee in February 1954, when a new national polity was coming into being under the Constitution of the People’s Republic promulgated in September 1954, may well have been used as a decisive reason for stepping up the action against Kao Kang’s group from a mere exposure to a purge.

<sup>40</sup> For questions involved in the Lin Piao affair, see, for immediate reference, “The Dissolution of the Mao-Lin Regime: The Lin Piao Affair” and “The Death of Lin Piao and Its Mystery” in Mineo Nakajima, *Images of China Examined (Chugoku Zoh no Kensho)*, Chuo Koron sha, 1972.

<sup>41</sup> V. I. Grunin, “The Truth about the Kao Kang-Jao Shu-shih Affair”, *op. cit.* O. B. Borisov similarly says: “In analyzing the Kao Kang-Jao Shu-shih affair, one cannot help noticing the fact that both men led the Party organization in China’s greatest industrial regions, Manchuria and East China (including Shanghai)” (“The Soviet Union and Manchuria, the Base for the Chinese Revolution,” *op. cit.*).

Looking at this settlement of the Kao Kang affair, we can see some general characteristics common to most of these leaders of the Kao-Jao group: that they were “native” leaders, and that they neither were Party leaders under Mao Tse-tung’s direct control nor had participated in the Long March<sup>42</sup>.

#### 4. The “truth” about the affair and its character

An internal struggle in the Chinese Communist Party, while being a policy dispute in character, always involves an aspect that reflects a fight over power within the top Party leadership. The Kao Kang affair apparently is no exception to this rule. But if the incident is to be viewed as a reflection of a fight among the top leaders, what is the most plausible picture of it? A variety of theories have been advanced to date.

These various theories largely share one significant view: that Liu Shao-ch’i, who was in the No. 2 political position under Mao Tse-tung, was the direct target picked by Kao Kang and Jao Shu-shih for their struggle. This is plausible from the fact that Liu played the leading role at the above-mentioned Fourth Plenum of the Central Committee, and that according to its official “charges” Kao Kang wanted to “serve as General Secretary or Vice-Chairman at the Party Headquarters and concurrently as Premier of the State Council<sup>43</sup>,” which suggests that he was anxious for the No. 2 position. It may be said that “if the Party announcement is to be taken at its face value, what Kao Kang aimed at was Liu Shao-ch’i’s position in the Party and Chou En-lai’s position in the State Council<sup>44</sup>.”

Based on this assumption, the first noteworthy view is that the fight was between Kao Kang and Jao Shu-shih on the one hand and Liu Shao-ch’i and Chou En-lai on the other. For example, Peter S. Tang, who was quick to attempt analysis following the exposure of the incident, takes note of the fact that Kao Kang tried to pit “the Party in the bases and the Army” against “the Party in the white areas”. Tang considers that Kao’s target was not Mao Tse-tung but Liu Shao-ch’i, who represented “the Party in the white areas”, and that Chou En-lai also may have been a target for Kao<sup>45</sup>. Chou Ch’ing-wen, author of *The Ten Turbulent Years*, who once belonged to the Chinese Democratic League, and served on the Administrative Committee of Tungpei<sup>46</sup>, the first local government,

<sup>42</sup> For such a view, see Hsu Kuan-san, *op. cit.*, First Part.

<sup>43</sup> “Resolution on the Kao Kang-Jao Shu-shih Anti-Party Alliance,” *op. cit.*

<sup>44</sup> Yasushi Okubo, *A History of the Chinese Communist Party (Chugoku Kyosanto shi)*, Last Volume, Hara Shobo, 1971, p. 689.

<sup>45</sup> Peter S. H. Tang, “Power Struggle in the Chinese CP: The Kao-Jao Purge,” *Problems of Communism*, Nov.–Dec. 1955 (Vol. IV, No. 6).

<sup>46</sup> The Administrative Committee of Tungpei (chaired by Lin Feng) was established in August 1946 as the first local government under the leadership of the CCP. In August 1949 it developed into the People’s Government of Tungpei (headed by Kao Kang). Through an organizational reform of the Major Local Administrative Regions in December 1953, the regime turned back into an Administrative Committee of Tungpei (chaired by Kao Kang). After the exposure of the Kao Kang affair, the system of the Major Local Administrative Regions was finally abolished.

from August 1946 to August 1949—until immediately before the foundation of the People's Republic—argues that Liu Shao-ch'i and Chou En-lai were Kao Kang's targets, saying: "When Mao Tse-tung at the end of the Long March finally got to Yen-an with his seven thousand odd dilapidated, exhausted Red Army troops, it is Kao Kang that accommodated them and enabled them to survive. He was the man to be credited for that. After the Chinese Communists seized power, Mao appointed him Vice-Chairman of the National People's Government and Chairman of the People's Government of Tungpei by way of rewarding him, much as an Emperor in feudal times would appoint his meritorious retainers as barons and ministers. Kao Kang, however, felt that he was being restrained by Liu Shao-ch'i in the Party and by Chou En-lai in the State Council . . . . In this struggle Kao claimed to be 'purging the top leader of undesirable aides', and did not speak against Mao Tse-tung himself, for he was aiming at Liu Shao-ch'i and Chou En-lai<sup>47</sup>." In this respect, Chin Hsiung-pai, author of *The Ten Big Problems in Communist China*, roughly agrees with Chou Ch'ing-wen, saying: "The purpose of the Kao-Jao alliance was to seize the leadership of Communist China, attack Liu Shao-chi, and at the same time take over the Premiership of the State Council from Chou En-lai. In this attempt, Kao and Jao had the support of Stalin in Moscow<sup>48</sup>." Such being the case, says Chou Ch'ing-wen with reference to Mao Tse-tung's absence from the Fourth Plenum of the Central Committee, "Mao purposely went back to his native place, and said he was going to spend the New Year Day according to the old calendar there, thus pretending to be a bystander<sup>49</sup>." In connection with Mao's absence from the meeting, other observers point out his "close comradeship" with Kao Kang, maintained since the latter received Mao's Long March troops in northern Shensi<sup>50</sup>. From this point of view they naturally regard Liu Shao-ch'i as the antagonist and conclude that the fight ended in a complete victory for Liu.

Referring to this issue, T'ien Ch'i, who penned a laborious work on the Kao Kang affair, advances a view which is full of insight. According to him<sup>51</sup>, the theory about "the Party in the bases and the Army" and "the Party in the white areas" may suggest Kao Kang's stand against Liu Shao-ch'i and Chou En-lai; but to Kao Kang, who then ranked fifth among the five Secretaries at the Party Headquarters—Mao Tse-tung, Liu Shao-ch'i, Chou En-lai, Chu Te, and Kao

<sup>47</sup> Chou Ch'in-wen, *The Ten Turbulent Years, (Fu bo 10 nen)*, translated by Atsunori Ikeda, Jiji Press, 1959, p. 63.

<sup>48</sup> Chin Hsiung-pai, *The Ten Big Problems in Communist China (Chukyo no 10 daimondai)*, translated by Gaichi Hongo, Jiji Press, 1963, p. 24.

<sup>49</sup> Chou Ch'ing-wen, *op. cit.*, p. 63.

<sup>50</sup> Ting T'ien-li, "The Truth about the Struggle in the Chinese Communist Party: Analysis of the Kao Kang-Jao Shu-shih 'Anti-Party Alliance' Plan", in *Various Views on the Kao Jao Affair in Communist China, op. cit.* Kuo Hua-lun, a Taiwan specialist in CCP history, enlarging on the years-long intraparty struggle within the northern Shensi base, and referring to Mao Tsetung's previous high estimation of Kao Kang, stresses that Kao's "heroism" eventually proved incompatible with "Mao Tse-tung's supremacy" (Kuo Hua-lun, *A Discussion of Communist Chinese History*, Vol. III, Taipei, Institute of International Relations, 1969, p.121).

<sup>51</sup> T'ien Ch'i, "All about the Kao-Jao 'Anti-Party Alliance'," in *Various View on the Kao-Jao Affair in Communist China, op. cit.*

Kang—"Chou En-lai and Chu Te equally did not matter much, and did not make real targets to strike at. His real target was Liu Shao-ch'i." Mao Tse-tung, however, pretended to be uninvolved on the surface, and let others think so while actually he had a hand in this affair, using Liu Shao-ch'i as his apparent agent. T'ien Ch'i surmises that Mao absented himself from the Fourth Plenum of the Central Committee (he was reportedly "on leave") because, considering the international background of the Kao Kang affair, "he [Mao—quoter's note] wanted to keep himself out of an international clash." Remembering that the Liu Shao-ch'i report at the Fourth Plenum of the Central Committee was made on the basis of the Mao Tse-tung proposal at a meeting of the Party's Central Politburo in December the year before, and considering the Sino-Soviet relationship underlying the Kao Kang affair from our current point of view, we must say that T'ien ch'i's opinion is highly persuasive.

In contrast to this way of thinking and its variations, another school of opinion emphasizes Kao Kang's rivalry with Liu Shao-ch'i and Teng Hsiao-p'ing. In the light of the way the Kao Kang affair was settled and how the leadership of the Party shifted subsequently, which we have seen above, the second view also seems very reasonable. Indeed, it is shared by V. I. Grunin, who apparently represents the official stand of Moscow. He assumes, as previously noted, that the action against Kao Kang was taken at Mao Tse-tung's instigation by Liu Shao-ch'i, and finally by Teng Hsiao-p'ing<sup>52</sup>. Hsu Kuan-san, who wrote an elaborate paper on the Kao Kang affair, also believes that Kao and Jao had complaints against Teng Hsiao-p'ing because Teng was then concurrently on three important committees—the Constitution Drafting Committee, Election Law Drafting Committee, and the Central Election Committee—and virtually presided over the business of the Central Committee; for they were aware that Teng had always been with them during the war with the Japanese and the subsequent civil fighting with the Nationalists, and apparently felt that Teng, therefore, should not be put in a position superior to theirs<sup>53</sup>.

Now, what was Mao Tse-tung's own stand in this matter? Available information affording a clue to this question is very limited, but some insight into the situation may be obtained by examining the way Mao received the Kao Kang affair.

According to unpublished literature, Mao referred to the incident at an expanded session of the Central Politburo in April 1956—after the affair was settled—and confessed: "We did right to hold the Fourth Plenum of the Central Committee and adopt the resolution. Otherwise, Kao Kang would have remained rampant for another year—an unimaginably dreadful situation<sup>54</sup>." This confession, though short of clarifying exactly why such a thought was "unimaginably dreadful" to him, gives a sufficient clue to Mao's attitude on the matter. Later, at a Chengtu conference in March 1958, Mao, as quoted previously, mentioned

<sup>52</sup> "The Truth about the Kao Kang-Jao Shu-shih Affair," *op. cit.*

<sup>53</sup> Hsu Kuan-san, *op. cit.*, Last Part.

<sup>54</sup> "Speech at an Enlarged Conference of the Central Politburo" (April 1956), in *Wan-sui*, *op. cit.*

examples of intimacy between Stalin and Kao Kang, and added: "The Kao-Jao affair was an earthquake of the eighth degree of magnitude<sup>55</sup>." When P'eng Te-huai was accused in August 1959, Mao came out with the now familiar pattern of relating the Peng incident to the Kao Kang affair by saying: "The fact that this key functionary of the Party used to be an important member of Kao Kang's conspiratorial anti-party group is one proof of that relationship<sup>56</sup>." The factor common to both men was undoubtedly "pro-Sovietism."

From the above considerations, it appears that whether Kao Kang's antagonist was Liu Shao-ch'i, or Chou En-lai, or Teng Hsiao-p'ing, in Mao's eyes elimination of Kao Kang had already been a vital, inevitable task that had to be done<sup>57</sup>.

Reviewing and putting together all these circumstances, we may conclude that the Kao Kang affair involved in its background a power struggle within the top leadership of the Party—that is, between the Party Headquarters bureaucracy headed by Mao Tse-tung and supported by Liu Shao-ch'i, Chou En-lai and Teng Hsiao-p'ing on the one hand, and Kao Kang and other locally based leaders on the other—with Liu and Teng particularly emerging in front to attack the Kao-Jao group. But this power struggle, as we have seen already, had international implications, with Stalin and the U.S.S.R. Communist Party throwing their weight behind Kao Kang. At the same time, this power struggle had the aspect of a fight between the national and local authorities against the backdrop of the country's two major industrial regions, Tungpei and Huatung, and "had its historical origin, it may be said, in an inevitable collision between the Chinese Communists' traditional 'revolutionary base' or 'local bloc' policy and the centralist policy adopted after the establishment of their regime<sup>58</sup>." The situation was

<sup>55</sup> "Talks at the Chengtu Conference" (March 1958), *op. cit.*

<sup>56</sup> "A Critique" (August 10, 1959), *op. cit.*

<sup>57</sup> Wang Ming, who stayed consistently pro-Soviet throughout his life, and continued to be Mao Tse-tung's rival in a way, strongly argues that the Kao Kang purge represented a Maoist scheme in which three aims were intricately involved. The first objective was "election of Teng Hsiao-p'ing as General Secretary of the Party's Central Committee in place of Liu Shao-ch'i." For this purpose, Mao first instigated such aides of his as Lo Jung-huan and Lo Jui-ch'ing to support Kao Kang, who was then openly opposing Liu Shao-ch'i's election as General Secretary. The second aim was "surrender of all Party, administrative and military powers in Tungpei" from Kao Kang to Lo Jung-huan." Although Mao struck a blow at Kao and eventually "murdered" him for the apparent reason that Kao's opposition to Liu meant rebellion against the Party leadership, the true reason for Kao's purge was that he had "followed a policy of cooperation with the Soviet Union in real earnest in defiance of Mao Tse-tung's basic strategy." The third objective, Wang believes, was to eliminate Jao Shu-shih, P'an Han-nien, and all other living witnesses to the traitorous national policy of "opposing Chiang Kai-shek by allying with the Japanese and Wang Ching-wei, which Mao had adopted in 1940 (according to Wang Ming, Mao secretly instructed Jao, then head of the General Political Department of the New Fourth Army, to send representatives in Jao's name for negotiations with representatives of Japan and Wang Ching-wei on the possibility of an anti-Chiang alliance, and at the same time to suspend all military action against the Japanese and Wang Ching-wei (Ван Мин, Полвека КПК и Предательство Мао Цзэ-дуна, стр. 196.).

<sup>58</sup> Yozo Karato, "The Party's Present Situation (Politics in the People's Republic of China—the Chinese Communist Party)", in *Society of Asian Politics and Economics ed., All about Chinese Politics and Economics, 1960 Edition (Chugoku Seiji Keizai Soran)*, Hitotsubashi Shobo, 1960, p.113.

made particularly grave and complicated by the fact that the main stage for the incident was Tungpei. Of course, as John Gittings says, “the true explanation” of the incident “may incorporate aspects of all theories, in addition to unknown factors of personal jealousy and rivalry within the Central Committee”<sup>59</sup>.

Having seen what was involved in the Kao Kang affair and what character it had<sup>60</sup>, we will now consider in the next section how power had been decentralized to Tungpei at that time.

## 5. Decentralization of power and Kao Kang

The Chinese Revolution, as is well known, followed the process of first arising in “the agrarian areas” and gradually surrounding “the urban areas”, thus setting up local regimes through “base” revolutions, and finally establishing a central national regime. This historical process of the Revolution resulted in perpetuating, even after the establishment of the central regime, a system of local governments consisting of several Major Administrative Regions into which the entire country was divided<sup>61</sup>. Under these circumstances, Kao Kang was a typical native politician or local strong man, initially based in Shensi and then moving to Tungpei after the foundation of the People’s Republic. Taking note of this fact Yozo Karato concludes summarily: “The main factor that made him the biggest local strong man was the military, political and economic position of Tungpei. Toward the end of World War II the region was occupied by the Soviets, and could carry out the revolution and construction programs under their direct protection. During the Korean War, Tungpei served as the direct supply base for the Red Chinese forces at the front, and traditionally it was the greatest base of heavy industry in China<sup>62</sup>.” Hsu Chun, a Hong Kong analyst, summarizes the characteristics of Tungpei into the following three points: (1) Liberated earlier than most other regions, Tungpei was generally in a leading position in land reform and industrial construction: (2) adjacent to the Soviet Union, Tungpei had to deal with the relationship between the Chinese Changchun Railway on the one hand and Lüshun (Port Arthur) and Talien (Dairen) on the other, and naturally had close ties with the Soviets; and (3) relatively well developed industrially, and

<sup>59</sup> John Gittings, *The Role of the Chinese Army*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1967, p. 276.

<sup>60</sup> Here we have not considered the role of the Army, which has often been a significant factor in internal struggles in the CCP. Although the above-mentioned Ch’en Yi report pointed out Kao Kang’s belief in “Army control of the Party,” we may conclude that “after all the army played no significant or identifiable part in the Kao Kang case (Gittings, *ibid.*, p. 279). In this connection, T’ien Ch’i observes: “The power of the Communist Party was originally ‘created by the Army,’ as Kao Kang himself said. But he had no army to speak of. When Lin Piao entered Tungpei with his troops, what had been there was limited to Kao’s own units of the Kirin-Heilunkiang Military Region, which were local in character” (T’ien Ch’i, *op. cit.*).

<sup>61</sup> Under the “General Rules on the Organization of People’s Government Committees in Major Administrative Regions” dated December 16, 1949 (*Jen-min jih-pao*, December 19, 1949), the entire country was divided into six Major Administrative Regions.

<sup>62</sup> Yozo Karato, *op. cit.*

easily constituting a single economic bloc, Tungpei did not particularly have to rely on the national Government, but was helping sustain the latter's economic strength<sup>63</sup>. For these and other reasons, Tungpei invariably held a unique position, and was treated differently from other regions; it appears, however, that "after Kao Kang took control of the Army and the Administration in Tungpei, it began to show clear signs of becoming an 'independent kingdom'<sup>64</sup>."

Under these circumstances, Kao Kang, according to an official charge, "had been carrying on conspiratorial activities . . . since 1949<sup>65</sup>." But as early as March 1948, Kao Kang, who had already been the leader of Tungpei, addressed a meeting of Inner Mongolian leaders advocating a "Kao Kang brand of internationalism" and arguing that Inner Mongolia, together with Outer Mongolia, should look toward the Soviet Union too<sup>66</sup>. Moreover, in July 1949—immediately before the foundation of the People's Republic of China—Kao Kang, as "the representative of the Northeast People's Democratic Government in China", led an independent trade mission to Moscow, and signed a "Mutual Goods Exchange Agreement between Tungpei and the Soviet Union" (according to a NCNA's news report from Shenyang dated August 1, 1949<sup>67</sup>)—applicable exclusively to Tungpei—with Stalin over the head of the Party Headquarters in Peking<sup>68</sup>.

With this sort of uniqueness, Kao Kang, speaking at a meeting of Tungpei leaders on September 8, 1949, under the title, "To Whom Does Glory Belong?," stated: "The central mission of the entire Party organization and people of Tungpei is economic construction, and all other operations should serve to make a success of it"; and after advancing the provocative view that some leaders in the Party were merely clinging to their past glories, he stressed: "Building Tungpei into the nation's industrial base—that is our great, glorious mission<sup>69</sup>."

<sup>63</sup> Hsu Chun, "A Study of the Kao Kang Affair," in *Various Views on the Kao-Jao Affair in Communist China*, *op. cit.*

<sup>64</sup> Chin Hsiung-pai, *op. cit.*, p. 24.

<sup>65</sup> "Resolution on the Kao Kan-Jao Shu-shih Anti-Party Alliance," *op. cit.*

<sup>66</sup> See Note 19.

<sup>67</sup> From Hsu Chun, *op. cit.*

<sup>68</sup> This trade agreement was good for one year, and represented the Soviet Union's first overt offer of aid, which would include industrial equipment, motor vehicles, oil, cotton goods, paper, medical implements, drugs and other items to be supplied from the Soviet Union to the Northeast People's Government. However, this agreement was not officially published, and only a *Tungpei jih-pao* (*Northeast Daily*) editorial dealing with the subject was reprinted in the *Jen-min Jih-pao* on August 9, 1949 (*Tungpei jih-pao* editorial, "Sincere Friendship for the Chinese People: Congratulations on the One-Year Trade Agreement between Tungpei and the Soviet Union"). In Russia, *Izvestia* reported the contents of the agreement on July 31 ("К вопросу о торговле Маньчжурии с СССР", *Известия* 31, VII, 1947). As a result of a subsequent meeting between Mao and Stalin, however, a formal trade agreement was signed between China and Russia on April 19, 1950, and thereafter Stalin changed the old policy of aiding Tungpei separately; "the various items on the aid program previously agreed upon between Kao Kang and Stalin were incorporated in the total items of aid to Communist China" (China Section, Asia Bureau, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, *Changing Sino-Soviet Relations, 1949-1958*, August 1959).

<sup>69</sup> Kao Kang, "To Whom Does Glory Belong?: A Speech at the Conference of Tungpei Leaders on September 8, 1949," in *Hsüeh Hsi* (*Studies*), Series I, Hong Kong Takung pao shé. According to Hsiang Te's memo mentioned previously, Ch'en Yi referred to this speech and bitterly criticized it (Hsiang Te, "The Truth about 'the Kao-Jao Anti-Party Alliance'," *op. cit.*).

Thus, there seems to have existed for some time a situation in which construction went on steadily in Tungpei under the leadership of Kao Kang, who “invited experts from the Soviet Union and sent students there by simply requesting ex post facto approval of the Central Government, or imported machinery and goods in considerable quantities from the Soviet Union and in return for them exported soy beans and other commodities from Tungpei under a trade agreement concluded by the Northeast People’s Government direct with the Soviet Union without the slightest knowledge of the External Trade Department in Peking<sup>70</sup>.” Tungpei was thus heading straight toward becoming an “independent kingdom” when in October 1949 the People’s Republic of China came into being. After its foundation, Mao Tse-tung himself led a delegation to Moscow and, though after a wrangle with Stalin, succeeded in signing a Sino-Soviet Treaty of Friendship, Alliance and Mutual Assistance in February 1950. This was the first blow to Kao Kang. As is well known, the conclusion of this pact was followed by frequent statements emphasizing the monolithic unity of China and Russia; and in China a campaign was launched to eulogize the Soviet Union. Consequently, Stalin’s support for Kao Kang had to “turn from overt to covert backing,” and the situation was gradually turning unfavorable to Kao. Under these circumstances, the Korean War broke out in June 1950. This “Resist America, Aid Korea” military campaign was carried out with Tungpei as its operation base, so that Tungpei became the immediate rear for the fighting. This further accelerated Kao Kang’s tendency toward independence, and he now began to take unified control of State enterprises too<sup>71</sup>. To deal with this situation, it is said, Mao Tse-tung was quick to take a number of steps in late 1950. First, he sent large forces loyal to him to Tungpei to “make it an ‘Aid Korea’ base on the one hand and lay pressure on Kao Kang’s military strength on the other<sup>72</sup>.”

Secondly, with respect to Party affairs, Mao operated through such men as Ch’en Yi, a Politburo Member who had been responsible for organizational and financial affairs of the Party in Tungpei, Li Fu-ch’un, First Vice-Chairman of the Northeast People’s Government, and Lin Feng, another Vice-Chairman, who was closely allied to Li Fu-ch’un, to shake up Kao Kang’s extremely firm personal and organizational basis<sup>73</sup> and to alienate him from all three branches of State authority in Tungpei—Party, military, and administrative<sup>74</sup>.

<sup>70</sup> Ch’en Yi report in Hsiang Te, *ibid.*

<sup>71</sup> “Comrade Kao Kang’s Summary Report at an Urban Operations Conference of the Northeast Bureau,” *Tungpei jih-pao*, June 25, 1951.

<sup>72</sup> T’ien Ch’i, *op. cit.*

<sup>73</sup> Kao Kang is said to have kept a “Big Four” group of closest aides including Chang Ming-yuan in Tungpei to maintain a firm personal and organizational basis there (see Hsiang Te, “The Truth about ‘the Kao-Jao Anti-Party Alliance’,” *op. cit.*, and other literature). Referring to this matter, Cheng Chu-yuan observes: “When the Northeast People’s Government was established in 1949, Kao Kang was Chairman and Li Fu-ch’un, Lin Feng and Kao Ch’ung-min were Vice-Chairman, while Chang Hsiu-shan, Chang Ming-yuan and Ch’en Po-ts’un were merely Head and Deputy-Head of the Northeast People’s Supervision Committee. After the Northeast People’s Government Committee was reorganized into the Northeast Administrative Committee on January 23, 1951, Kao Kang took steps to have Chang Ming-yuan promoted to Vice-Chairman and Chief of the Secretariat of the Northeast Administrative Committee, and Chang at the same time became Third Secretary of the Northeast Bureau of the CCP, thus emerging as

Thirdly, to keep Kao Kang from spreading his influence over relations with North Korea, Mao Tse-tung used Lin Piao's Fourth Field Army units and put pressure on Kao. In the latter half of 1952, indeed, Ni Chih-liang, Chinese Ambassador in North Korea, who as Commander of the Kirin Army had been closely allied to Kao, suddenly disappeared<sup>75</sup>.

In 1952, Mao abolished the "Tungpei bi," which was different from the national currency used in mainland China, and replaced it with the standard "Jen-min bi"; in August, under the slogan of Unify the Local Administration, he abolished the "Northeast People's Government", and in November also abolished the Six Major Administrative Regions<sup>76</sup>—this action was apparently aimed mainly at Kao Kang's Tungpei. The "independent kingdom" of Tungpei thus faced a crisis, and at the Nineteenth Session of the Central People's Government Council Committee at which the Six Major Administrative Region was abolished, Kao Kang was appointed Chairman of the State Planning Commission of the Central People's Government Council. As Hsu Kuan-san points out, it is evident that this action was "aimed at separating Kao Kang from his 'independent kingdom' <sup>77</sup> "; and following his appointment to this post in Peking, the situation moved into a new phase. The stage thus shifted from Shenyang to Peking<sup>78</sup>.

## 6. Tungpei for the Soviet Union

As we have seen in the last section, Tungpei meant to Kao Kang the basis for his political growth—his vital asset. Naturally, his enthusiasm for turning the region into the nation's industrial base and economic construction center was extraordinary<sup>79</sup>, and this idea was often expressed by him and his followers in the form of the assertion that Tungpei should be the priority base for the construction of heavy industry with Soviet assistance under the First Five-Year-Plan.

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one of the top men in Tungpei. Also, Chao Te-tsun was promoted to Director of Agrarian Operations in the Northeast Bureau of the CCP and Chairman of the People's Government of Heilungkiang; Ch'en Po-ts'un, to Director of Personnel Affairs of the Northeast Administrative Committee; and Kuo Feng, to Secretary of the Party Committee in Liaoning Province. As a result, actual Party and administrative powers in entire Tungpei fell in the hands of the Kao Kang group. One can see clearly that Kao Kang intended to use Tungpei as a base for winning the position of the No. 2 leader in the Party" (Cheng Chu-yuan, *The Situation in Mainland China and the Future of the Chinese Communists*, Hong Kong, Freedom Press, 1959).

<sup>74</sup> T'ien Ch'i, *op. cit.*

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>76</sup> "National People's Government Decides on Changes in Structure and Mission of People's Governments (Military Government Committees) in Major Administrative Regions" dated November 15, 1952 (*Jen-min jih-pao*, November 17, 1952).

<sup>77</sup> Hsu Kuan-san, *op. cit.*, Last Part.

<sup>78</sup> Referring to Kao Kang's shift to Peking, one noteworthy view is the following. "Kao Kang would not move to his new post in Peking. However, with the death of Stalin, in 1953 . . . Kao Kang lost his main backer, and finally agreed to go to Peking to become Chairman of the State Planning Commission" (Chin Hsiung-pai, *op. cit.*, p. 24).

<sup>79</sup> This is well reflected in the above-mentioned speech titled "To Whom Does Glory Belong?" made by Kao Kang at a meeting of Tungpei leaders on September 8, 1949 (Hsüeh Hsi, *op. cit.*).

Meanwhile, this unique position of Tungpei made Kao Kang's political status very great. Now he had control of all Party, administrative, military and civilian powers in Tungpei, and "when the slogan, 'Long Live Kao Kang!' appeared at a mass rally in Shenyang, it no longer sounded strange<sup>80</sup>." This prominent status of Kao Kang was not a small threat to the Maoist Party leadership because Kao was operating in Tungpei, the nation's base for construction, and also because Kao's presence in the process of making Tungpei a special region was apparently favored by Stalin.

It may be said that Stalin used three strategic approaches in dealing with neighboring areas and expanding there: (1) military occupation, (2) utilizing the existing regime and gradually usurping its authority, and (3) utilizing a civil war or a local war and backing the local Communist party<sup>81</sup>. In helping a local Communist party, however, he did not like the influence of the native Communists to increase, but often preferred to send in "*Moskoviches*" (Moscow-trained pro-Soviet leaders). According to some sources, "Stalin seems to have taken a similar policy for Tungpei in China, where Li Li-san and Chou Pao-chung were the key *Moskoviches* sent in <sup>82</sup>." The former, famous for his "Li Li-san policy line," suddenly appeared in Harbin in early 1946 after spending fifteen years in Moscow, presumably—according to one speculation—with a view to "setting up a Communist regime in northern Manchuria."<sup>83</sup> Chou Pao-chung, who had been known as the leader of the anti-Japanese guerrillas in Tungpei, had fled to Siberia, but returned as soon as Tungpei was liberated by the Soviets, and became Chairman of the People's Government of Kirin. It should be noted that Kao Kang's political uprising took place through the presence of these *Moskoviches*.

Referring to Tungpei, Stalin himself is said to have remarked: "I did not agree to let the Chinese Communist forces enter Tungpei<sup>84</sup>." In signing a friendship and alliance treaty with Chiang Kai-shek in 1945, the Soviet Union took advantage of the latter's "weaknesses" and recovered the old Tsarist Russian interests of the Chinese Changchun Railway, Lüshunk'ou (Port Arthur), and Port Dairen. The policy of the Soviets for Tungpei following Japan's surrender mainly had the following aims: (1) military occupation of the territories which Stalin got assigned to the Soviet Union at the Potsdam and Yalta Conferences; (2) seizure and transfer to the Soviet Union of as much of Manchuria's industrial equipment and machinery as possible; and (3) removing to the Soviet Union all available Japanese prisoners of war as a cheap labor force<sup>85</sup>.

In this connection, Chung Tao, a Taiwan analyst, says: "In 1946, while the Chinese Government was negotiating with the Soviets in Moscow, earnestly

<sup>80</sup> Yu I-lo, "A Tungpei Man's View of Kao Kang," *The Ming pao Monthly*, February 1966.

<sup>81</sup> For details of this Soviet policy, see J. M. MacKintosh, *Strategy and Tactics of Soviet Foreign Policy*, London, Oxford University Press, 1962, pp. 33-41.

<sup>82</sup> *Sino-Soviet Relations around the Establishment of the People's Republic of China: The Sino-Soviet Alliance and Its Behavior*, mimeographed edition, Tokyo, June 1970, p. 27.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 27-28.

<sup>84</sup> Chiang Chung-cheng, *Soviet Russia's Presence in China: A Summary of the Thirty-Year History of the Chinese and Russian Communists*, Taipei, Chung-Yan Wen-wu Kung-ying shé, 1956, p. 154.

<sup>85</sup> MacKintosh, *op. cit.*, pp. 35-36.

reasoning and appealing to protect its sovereignty in Tungpei, the Soviet forces started robber-like looting in Tungpei, and took away various industrial equipment, large machinery and power plants from the region over which China had absolute sovereignty<sup>86</sup>.” As is well known, numerous Japanese witnessed such behavior on the part of the Soviets in Manchuria following Japan’s defeat. Chung Tao further points out: “The removed industrial equipment and machinery were worth more than US\$858 million, according to a U.S. ‘reparations committee’ that arrived in Manchuria in June 1946 [the U.S. economic investigation team headed by Edwin W. Pauley—quoter’s note], and the loss including wear and replacement costs reached US\$2 billion<sup>87</sup>.” In contrast to this view, a recent Soviet paper says: “Indeed, part of the equipment at some old Japanese munition factories was removed by the Soviet Army authorities because, under the circumstances of U.S. military intervention in the Chinese civil war, there was a possibility of these factories being used for war purposes against the people’s democratic forces in China. The value of the removed equipment was nothing much<sup>88</sup>.” This must be called a strained argument.

In any case the Soviet Union, while negotiating with the Chiang Kai-shek regime under the 1945 Sino-Soviet Treaty of Friendship and Alliance, helped the Chinese Communists enter Manchuria, which was then under Soviet occupation, and let them occupy such cities in northern Manchuria as Harbin, Tsitsihar, Kirin, and even Changchun eventually. Of course, it cannot be said that such operations were carried out through close cooperation between the Communist Parties of China and Russia. Referring to the situation then prevailing, Jack Belden writes: “Strangely enough, the Russians at this time helped Chiang Kai-shek and not the Chinese Communists. For a while the volunteers and General Lin Piao’s bands were taking over the countryside, the Russian Red Army installed Chiang’s officials in all Manchurian cities and protected them for many months<sup>89</sup>.” Therefore, it was extremely important for Mao Tse-tung to consolidate Tungpei. His anxiety for the construction of the Tungpei base is clearly reflected in his December 1945 speech titled, “Build Stable Base Area in the Northeast<sup>90</sup>.” It is after these developments that construction of Tungpei began in 1948 under Kao Kang’s leadership. But in October 1949 the People’s Republic of China came into being, and Mao Tse-tung went to Moscow for talks with Stalin, resulting in the conclusion of a new Sino-Soviet Treaty of Friendship and Alliance and a number of agreements between the two countries, which put considerable restrictions on the Soviet interests in Tungpei. One of the Sino-Soviet agreements says: “The Government of the Soviet Union and the Govern-

<sup>86</sup> Chung Tao, “The Struggle of the Chinese and Soviet Communist Parties and the Struggle between the Chinese and Soviet States and Peoples” (Japanese translation, “Chuso Ryo Kyosanto no Toso to Chuso Ryogoku, Ryominzoku Kan no Toso”), *Mondai to Kenkyu*, New Year issue, 1974.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>88</sup> O. B. Borisov, *op. cit.*

<sup>89</sup> Jack Belden, *China Shakes the World*, New York, Harpers & Bros., 1949, p. 374.

<sup>90</sup> “Build Stable Base Area in the Northeast” (December 28, 1945), in *Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung*, Vol. IV, Peking, Jen-min Chu-pan shê, 1960.

ment of China affirm that a basic change has occurred in the situation of the Far East since 1945 . . . . The Government of the Soviet Union and the Government of China have recognized that this new situation offers the possibility of new settlements on the questions of the Chinese Changchun Railway, Lüshunk'ou, and Port Dairen<sup>91</sup>."

The Sino-Soviet conference on the occasion of Mao's visit to Moscow in early 1950 was a historic summit meeting needed by both countries, and served to fill a long-standing communication gap between Stalin and Mao. There is no denying, however, that as T'ien Ch'i points out<sup>92</sup>, Mao also had the important objective of discussing with Stalin the problem of Kao Kang's attempt to turn Tungpei into a special region. As we have already considered in detail elsewhere<sup>93</sup>, the Sino-Soviet talks between Stalin and Mao, while producing some useful results for China, left in Mao's heart a deep-rooted sense of mistrust in Stalin, and just because the outcome was not quite satisfactory, the presence of Kao Kang gradually became intolerable to Mao. From the current viewpoint of Moscow, which now regards Kao as an "internationalist," it does appear that "as China recovered from economic confusion and strengthened its international position with Soviet aid, Mao Tse-tung began to feel that large-scale cooperation with the Soviets was likely to allow the internationalist forces in China to grow rapidly and seize power in the Party and the administration from the Maoists<sup>94</sup>." Thus, Kao Kang had to be purged following the circumstantial change: Stalin's death.

## 7. Stalin and Kao Kang—by way of a conclusion

In the above analysis we have seen a rough outline of the Kao Kang affair and its international background, that is, its relationship to Stalin. Of course, connections between Stalin and Kao Kang have commonly been speculated upon in the past. As an example, we can mention a speculation by Klaus Mehnert, who is familiar with Sino-Soviet relations and has been to China for investigations. Referring to the relationship of the Kao Kang affair to Stalin, he writes in his book, *Peking und Moskau*:

I constantly asked people I talked to in Red China what they thought of the background to this case. No one seemed to know exactly, but nearly all of them expressed the belief that Kao Kang in his struggle for independence, had cooperated more closely with Stalin than was permissible for a provincial governor. Owing to a lack of concrete evidence, I myself prefer to refrain from passing judgment. However, it would not be surprising if Stalin, when he saw his Manchurian venture collapsing after Mao's victory throughout China, had encouraged the formation of a government more or less independent of Peking in order to make it a satellite of Moscow—like Outer Mongolia, which had once belonged to Manchu empire<sup>95</sup>.

<sup>91</sup> "Agreement on the Chinese Changchun Railway, Lüshunk'ou, and Dairen" (February 14, 1950), *Jen-min jih-pao*, February 15, 1950.

<sup>92</sup> T'ien Ch'i, *op. cit.*

<sup>93</sup> See Mineo Nakajima's, Paper, *op. cit.*

<sup>94</sup> V. I. Grunin, "The Truth about the Kao Kang-Jao Sou-shek Affair", *op. cit.*

<sup>95</sup> Klaus Mehnert, *Peking und Moskau*, Stuttgart, Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1962, S. 319-320.

From this circumspect statement, it may be surmised that even in China the relationship between the Kao Kang affair and Stalin had tacitly been made known to the public. Needless to say, this speculation made by Mehnert in the early sixties has since been corroborated by more circumstantial evidence and unpublished literature. Indeed, speculations on connections between the Kao Kang affair and Stalin date back fairly far, and statements suggestive of them have been contained even in official literature of the CCP. For example, “On the Historical Experience of the Dictatorship” of the Proletariat—the famous thesis published by the CCP in connection with the 1956 “criticism of Stalin”—says: “In 1953, the anti-party alliance of Kao Kang and Jao Shu-shih also appeared in our Party. This alliance represented reactionary forces at home and abroad, and was aimed at jeopardizing the cause of the Revolution<sup>96</sup>” (underscoring by quoter). This statement suggests that the Kao Kang affair was not just an internal problem but had international implications. However, in the context of this incident that occurred mainly in Tungpei, what does the term “abroad” mean? When the thesis was published, the CCP was still calling Wang Ming a “Comrade”, saying: “During the period of the anti-Japanese war, there also appeared in our Party the wrong policy of right-wing opportunism represented by Comrade Wang Ming<sup>97</sup>.” But Wang, a consistently “pro-Soviet” leader, died in Moscow away from home in March 1974. When I stood where he was buried, reverently with a huge bust, in the cemetery of the Novodevich Monastery in Moscow, I could not help recognizing anew the complex interrelationship between the history of Sino-Soviet relations and the history of internal struggles in the CCP<sup>98</sup>. Had Kao Kang achieved his purpose in this affair, it would have produced much more serious consequences; indeed, it went very close to that historical possibility. The above-mentioned thesis, “On the Historical Experience of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat,” says with reference to the Kao Kang affair: “Had the Central Committee of the Party not discovered it quickly enough and beaten the alliance without losing time, the Party and the cause of the Revolution would have sustained an immeasurable loss<sup>99</sup>.” About the same time, Mao Tse-tung himself observed: “Otherwise, Kao Kang would have remained rampant for another year—an unimaginably dreadful situation<sup>100</sup>.” The “immeasurable loss” and the “unimaginably dreadful situation” must have meant having Kao Kang in alliance with Stalin not only set up a “pro-Soviet regime” in Tungpei but also use it as a base for seizing power from the hands of the Party leadership in Peking. From the general pattern of Stalin’s designs and behavior, it is easy to imagine that he supported Kao Kang in such a “conspiracy.” That must have made it all the more urgent for Mao Tse-tung and the Party leadership in Peking to purge Kao. From

<sup>96</sup> “On the Historical Experience of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat,” *Jen-min jih-pao*, April 5, 1965.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>98</sup> See Mineo Nakajima, “Moscow, Ulan Bator, Peking,” *Chuo Koron*, March 1975.

<sup>99</sup> “On the Historical Experiences of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat,” *op. cit.*

<sup>100</sup> “Speech at an Enlarged Conference of the Central Politburo,” *op. cit.*

the Soviet point of view, the same situation must have appeared to be one in which increased cooperative relations with the Soviet Union had strengthened the economic and international status of China, allowing the Chinese “internationalists”—that is, “pro-Soviets”—to grow rapidly and causing Mao Tse-tung to fear that they might take power away from him<sup>101</sup>.

Indeed, the Soviets have recently made the following decisive confession in this respect: “What had important significance in the establishment of political goals and the execution of social and economic measures by the Chinese Communist Party in 1945–1949 were the direct contacts between it and the Communist Party of the Soviet Union effected initially in Yen-an and later in Manchuria and Moscow. For this purpose, the Central Committee of Communist Party of the Soviet Union invited several important members of the Chinese Communist Party to Moscow. On all matters of principle, letters were exchanged and personal contacts made to maintain regular exchanges of opinion between the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and that of the Chinese Communist Party<sup>102</sup>” (underscoring by original author; double underscoring by quoter).

Now, it is said that the above-mentioned disappearance of Wang Ming and other “pro-Soviet” leaders occurred after the Kao Kang purge. Speculating on this matter, T’ien Ch’i writes: “Simultaneously with the downfall of Kao Kang and Jao Shu-shih, Ch’en Shao-yü [Wang Ming’s real name—quoter’s note] and Li Li-san ceased to be heard of. This no doubt had something to do with the fate of Kao and Jao<sup>103</sup>.”

Also, according to the official view of Peking, as we have seen already, the Kao Kang affair involved P’eng Te-huai, who later clashed with the Maoists over the “Three Red Banners” policy and the Sino-Soviet dispute following the “criticism of Stalin”, and was eventually purged as a “revisionist” and “Khrushchevist”. But the very fact that the Kao Kang affair has been discussed in the same breath with Peng’s purge suggests a relationship between the former and the Soviet Union. It is interesting to note in this connection that Khrushchev is said to have told a meeting in Bucharest in June 1960: “Kao Kang was found guilty simply because he had opposed the wrong policy of the Chinese Communist Party toward the Soviet Union<sup>104</sup>.”

As the above analysis indicates, the Kao Kang affair had very serious and grave international implications, and in this light further consideration must be given to its possible connection with the purge of “the pro-Soviets” in the Korean Labor Party. As some outside observers have already established, this party in Korea purged Pak Hŏn-yŏng, known as the leader of the Labor Party in the South and as a native Communist, and Hŏ Kai-i, a “pro-Soviet” and “Mosko-

<sup>101</sup> See V. I. Grunin, “The Truth about the Kao Kang-Jao Shu-shih Affair,” *op. cit.*

<sup>102</sup> O. B. Borisov, *op. cit.*

<sup>103</sup> T’ien Ch’i, *op. cit.*

<sup>104</sup> David A. Charles, “The Dismissal of Marshal P’eng Te-huai,” *The China Quarterly*, Oct.–Dec. 1961.

vich”<sup>105</sup>. As we have seen already<sup>106</sup>, the Korean War, which broke out partly in connection with Stalin’s strategy in Asia, came to an end at long last in June 1953—only after his death in March that year; and we cannot ignore the apparent connection between these two post-Stalin developments: the purge of Ho and Pak in Korea and the subsequent Kao Kang affair in China. T’ien Ch’i, after pointing out connections between the purge of Pak, Li Syng Yop, and Ho on the one hand and Stalin’s death and the Kao Kang affair on the other, argues that the affair also involved such “pro-Soviet” leaders as Chen Shao-yü (Wang Ming), Li Li-san and Ni Chih-liang, and surmises that their names were not mentioned in connection with the affair for fear of a serious impact on international relations—that is, “to avoid, firstly, provocation to the Soviet Union and, secondly, exposure of various rivalries between Peking and Moscow<sup>107</sup>.” This was only natural under the cold-war situation in Asia and in the general world environment at that time when monolithic unity between China and Russia and consolidation of the socialist bloc were loudly called for.

In the light of these circumstances as well as Stalin’s then absolute authority and the relative power positions of China and Russia, we can easily see why Peking had to put off Kao Kang’s purge until Stalin’s death. Probably considering Kao’s intimacy with Stalin, Mao, at the news that Stalin was in critical condition, took Kao with him and called at the Soviet Embassy in Peking by way of making an inquiry; and on the list of leaders attending a memorial meeting for the late Stalin in Peking, Kao’s name was in the third place—above that of Liu Shao-ch’i<sup>108</sup>.

But the mighty Kao Kang had to be warned by Mao on December 24, 1953—the day on which Beria was officially found guilty by the Supreme Court in Moscow—at a meeting of the Central Politburo, where, as previously noted, Mao “proposed” a “Resolution on the Strengthening of Party Unity”, thus taking the first step toward Kao’s purge.

Now, how serious was Stalin, who was apparently intimate with Kao Kang, in backing him up?

Mao Tse-tung spoke only once about Kao’s personal relationship with the Soviet ruler, saying: “Stalin was very fond of Kao Kang and made him a special present of a motor car<sup>109</sup>.” But when Stalin received Mao—the victorious leader of the Chinese Revolution—in Moscow, the Soviet Premier’s mind apparently wavered somewhat. A Chinese then present in Tungpei, writing about Kao’s reputation there, surmises an opportunistic attitude held by Stalin in case things did not go well, and observes: “Had Stalin been more resolute, Kao Kang would have become ‘the King of Tungpei’ long ago<sup>110</sup>.” Such an attitude on the part of

<sup>105</sup> For details of this purge in North Korea, see, for immediate reference, Robert A. Scalapino and Chong-Sik Lee, *Communism in Korea*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1972, p. 404, p. 509.

<sup>106</sup> Mineo Nakajima, “The Korean War and China,” *op. cit.*

<sup>107</sup> T’ien Ch’i, *op. cit.*

<sup>108</sup> See Hsu Kuan-san, *op. cit.*, First Part.

<sup>109</sup> “Talks at the Chengtu Conference,” *op. cit.*

<sup>110</sup> Yu I-lo, *op. cit.*

Stalin seems to be corroborated by Khrushchev's memoir. Recalling a scene during Mao's visit to Moscow when Stalin gave a report written by Panyushkin, then Soviet Ambassador in Peking and an information officer, on his contacts with Kao Kang, Khrushchev says: "Stalin decided he wanted to win Mao's trust and friendship, so he took [Panyushkin's] reports about his conversation with Kao Kang, and handed them over to Mao, saying, 'Here, you might be interested in these.' God only knows what Stalin thought he was doing<sup>111</sup>."

If this story is correct, various suppositions will be possible about Stalin's real intentions. Khrushchev himself supposes: "Why did Stalin betray Kao Kang? I think he was motivated by his own suspiciousness. He figured that sooner or later Mao would have learned on his own that Kao Kang had been informing on him—and, if that had happened, Mao could accuse Stalin of fomenting opposition to the Chinese Government. So Stalin decided it would be better to sacrifice Kao Kang and thereby earn Mao's trust. However, I don't think Mao ever really trusted Stalin<sup>112</sup>." If this is what really happened, it may be said that the choice Stalin made was indeed Stalinist. Fortunately to Mao Tse-tung, however, Stalin died in March 1953. At the same time, his death no doubt sealed the fate of Kao Kang and his followers.

Thus, the Kao Kang affair is a very important development in the history of Sino-Soviet relations and in the historical process of the Sino-Soviet confrontation.

<sup>111</sup> Strobe Talbott, *Khrushchev Remembers: The Last Testament*, *op. cit.*, p. 243.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 244.