

I just lay there on my mat and firmly refused to go to the hospital. I could remember the stories about the prison hospital that I had heard from Rim Saeng Pin in cell block A and they helped he hold out that way.

Lieutenant Nam didn't go home that day after siesta time. Instead he went and got some hot water in a pan, came back to the cell and made up some of the powdered milk from my packages and told me to drink it. I couldn't drink a spoon full of water, let alone some milk. Occasionally my temperature must have gone over 40 degrees because I would become very confused and the ceiling would spin all around and turn upside down. When I would come to my senses I would think about the tender care I could be receiving from my family.

In the midst of my raging fever I occasionally would imagine seeing the faces of Hwam Hung, the ruler of South Vietnam, Hwam Ban Dong, the Vietnamese Prime Minister, and Lei Jun, the head of the Vietnamese Communists.

I would feel such anger and hatred for the abuse and mental whippings that I had suffered at the hands of these criminals that I would grind my teeth and try to yell out "you bastards", but all I could muster was a useless groan.

Lieutenant Nam became worried and ordered two guards to lay me on my mat in the hall outside my cell and stay up and take care of me for the night. I had mistakenly thought that these two guards were assistant wardens.

Lieutenant Nam, who obviously didn't know me very well, again tried to get me to go to the the prison hospital on 28 June but I continued to refuse and stubbornly insisted that the doctor come and visit me.

Lieutenant Nam finally gave in and that afternoon had the female doctor, 3 wardens, and 2 male nurses come and visit. After the doctor returned to the hospital from visiting me she sent some medicine.

On 30 June my high fever broke and I continued to have a mild temperature except in the morning and at night when my temperature would periodically rise for one or two hours and I would get the chills as though I had malaria.

My high fever completely went away as of July 1 but I continued to have a slight fever. I was able to eat a little rice gruel in the morning and evening. As of July 3 I only intermittently had a slight fever and from the 4th on I was able to even eat rice.

That morning Lieutenant Nam brought an English translator with him and told me to write a letter in English to Chairman Lee requesting a care package.

Lieutenant Nam was the second good person I had met while in prison. I had been through 20 or so wardens in cell blocks A, B and D and I knew what kind of people they were. Among all of these wardens First Lieutenant Ku from cell block A and Lieutenant Nam from cell block D were exceptionally honest and good people.

When I was in cell block A all of the wardens there felt a little animosity toward Koreans except for First Lieutenant Ku. Towards the end of 1976, following the example of his superior, one of First Lieutenant Ku's assistants began to treat me kindly. First Lieutenant Ku even treated the Vietnamese prisoners well so he had a reputation for being a good person.

While I was in cell block A I was very thankful to First Lieutenant Ku for allowing me to do various things like running and exercising in the hall and bathing, so one day after enjoying the privilege of bathing at the water tank in the hall I went over next to where he was sitting at his desk, which was in the middle of the hall and gave him a Parker 75 ball pen as a gift. I explained, by pointing at my heart, that this was a token of my sincere appreciation. I let him know that I wanted to pay him back for his kindness but he just repeatedly thanked me and refused to accept it. We went back and forth for about a minute, me insisting that he take it and him refusing, and I realized that it wouldn't be good for the guards to see this so I opened up his desk drawer, dropped the pen in, closed it and scurried back to my cell.

In a little while he followed me to my cell and after he had locked the door he dropped the pen wrapped up in a piece of newspaper back into my cell, chuckled, and left.

Twenty days after that I put a pack of Vietnamese filter cigarettes that I liked into his drawer. He again followed me to my cell and returned them. I told him that this was a sincere expression of my heart and not to be so stubborn. The next day when I had finished bathing, I stuck another pack in his drawer. Unable to refuse my sincere person to person gesture of thanks anymore, he accepted one pack.

One month after this his assignment was changed. As he left for cell block AH the morning of May 11, 1977 he stopped by my cell and gave me a pack of Vietnamese Banggo cigarettes. He was paying me back for the pack I had given him before. His one month salary was 85 dong. At the official exchange rate this would be about \$47.00 but on the black market it was only worth \$5.70. This was a man who tried to do what was right even though he earned so little. Even under the stifling and sickening rule of the Vietnamese Communists, even in this kind of a garbage dump, there was a rose blooming.

Lieutenant Nam of cell block D on the 2nd floor was a good person like First Lieutenant Ku was. The first time I saw him was June 1, 1977.

He was about 1.7 meters tall, thin, and was wearing worn out civilian clothes. At first I thought he was an old non-commissioned officer but I later confirmed that he was a Police Lieutenant.

In cell block A when I was taken outside I had always been carefully isolated from the other prisoners but here in cell block D prisoners from 2 or 3 cells were allowed to go outside at the same time where they were gathered in one place. Here they were only partially separated. That's where I met Minister Rok and Minister Than and was able to talk with people like former South

Vietnamese Army Colonel Khiet, and former counselor at the Vietnamese Embassy in Korea, Mr. Yung.

When we went outside there was one guard for every prisoner and officially prisoners were not supposed to talk to anyone except their own cell mate. However when a nice warden let us back in, he sometimes closed his eyes to a little whispering between the prisoners. The prisoners would talk about things like the packages and letters they had received, about being released, about the wardens, about the guerilla activities of the former government, about the international situation, and about their own family situations.

When I received a package I would share with Minister Than, Minister Rok, Colonel Khiet, Counselor Yung and others and they would share with me when they got packages.

When Lieutenant Nam had been a Second Lieutenant in the police, he had been one of Ho Chi Min's presidential body guards and had been known as a sharp shooter. But he couldn't read. There were quite a few high police officials who didn't know how to read.

Since Lieutenant Nam didn't know how to read, when prisoners wrote letters requesting packages and submitted them to him, he would call for Ho Ban Kiet and while having him read each letter out loud, he would sit there and listen. According to prison rules if the letter praised the policies of the Vietnamese Communists, and the inmate wrote that he had diligently gone through the reeducation program and converted to Communism, and the letter said that the prisoner was eating well and getting along well in prison, then Lieutenant Nam would put the letter on the right side of his desk and pass it along. If the letter did not praise the policies of the Vietnamese Communists and didn't say anything about the reeducation program going well and didn't say that the prisoner had become a good Communist, then Lieutenant Nam would put them on the left side of his desk and withhold sending them.

These letters which were withheld, according to the whim of the warden would either be sent to the prison officials where they would be put into the prisoners personal file as evidence of being a counter-revolutionary or would just be ignored and ripped up. But Lieutenant Nam had a good heart even though he was faithful to the Vietnamese workers party and would return these letters back to those who wrote them and tell them to write them again until finally they were able to get their packages.

When a letter requesting a package passed the warden's inspection, they would be sent through the prison education office to the person to whom they were addressed.

On July 4 I was finally allowed to write a letter in English as I had wanted.

Having been imprisoned here for a year and 9 months, I knew what kind of letters I must write (to request packages) for prison officials to pass them on and I generally knew what kind of pitiful letters the Vietnamese and foreign prisoners here at Chihwa prison have been writing. I firmly decided on the following three rules for writing letters requesting a package:

First, even if it meant that I couldn't receive any packages, even if it meant my life, I would not write anything about the reeducation programs or converting to Communism.

Second, I would never write anything good or bad about the policies of the Vietnamese Communists.

Third, I would write about the special exercising and bathing privileges I received in cell block A, the friendly treatment of Lieutenant Nam when I was sick in cell block D, and about the friendly treatment which other wardens had shown me and express my gratitude to them.

The third of these rules was strictly about expressing my gratitude to the individual wardens who had shown me kindness, not about any of the policies of the Vietnamese Communists.

However, this expression of gratitude for the special treatment which some of the wardens extended me could be misinterpreted as praise for the policies of the Vietnamese Communists. I knew this but thought that it was all right. Perhaps this way my request letters would even make it through the wardens censoring. As a matter of fact, if the situation was carefully examined, how could this kind of treatment be considered special treatment when diplomats are not supposed to be imprisoned at all and are suppose to be protected by international law?

According to international law, foreign diplomats are not supposed to ever be imprisoned and are always supposed to be treated well and returned to their countries in good condition. If, however, something was terribly wrong and a diplomat did need to be detained, they should at least be allowed the minimum human decencies of having three meals a day, being able to go outside every day, and being able to bathe when needed. So the fact that the treatment which First Lieutenant Ku and Lieutenant Nam had been given me was considered special treatment exposed to the whole world just how stingy and unscrupulous the policies of the Vietnamese administrators were.

So I decided to follow the three rules above in the future whenever I wrote an official letter to my family or to Chairman Lee requesting a package. On July 4 I wrote my first such letter and gave it to Lieutenant Nam.

On July 5 First Lieutenant Ku, who was working in cell block AH and some other warden I didn't know came to visit me in my cell. They asked about my illness from which I had already completely recovered, and then left.

From this day on, perhaps because he was worried about how much weight I had lost from being sick, Lieutenant Nam told the guard who brought my meals, to

bring an extra bucket of hot water to me each night and in the morning. I used part of this water to drink and part of it for bathing. This special treatment lasted for the next 4 months until I was moved from cell block D. This was exceptional treatment which I only received in cell block D at Chihwa prison.

On 9 July I wrote my 9th report to the Foreign Minister.

1977 July 9

To the Foreign Minister:

A. Following is a summary of what has happened to me since my last report.

B. On June 24 at about 4:00 in the morning I began to feel the chills and then I got a fever. I had a bad case of the flu until June 31 with high temperatures ranging up around 39 to 40 degrees. From July 1 on I continued intermittently to have a slight fever. On July 4 this too went away and I felt completely better.

C. While I was so sick, the guards were very kind to me and did the following things:

1. The nurse in the cell block D medical office had me take 2 vitamin C shots and 4 vitamin B6 pills every day.
2. On June 27 after having had a high temperature, around 39 or 40 degrees, and having not been able to eat or drink anything for 3 days, the guards moved me from cell 4, which was only about one and a half pyong and had bad circulation, to cell 1 which was about 4 pyong and had good circulation. The warden packed my bags and moved them with me. Again I was the only one in the cell.
3. In the evening on June 27 I started slipping in and out of consciousness as though my temperature had risen over 40 degrees, and the resident warden became very worried. He had two of the guards move me onto a straw mat out in the hall and take care of me all night.
4. On June 28 in the morning, a guard helped me go outside to receive some fresh air with Pastor Wen Banlock and several other prisoners. I couldn't stand the bright sunlight, though, because of my high temperature so I sat down on a bench in the shade. Then I started feeling dizzy and nauseous and laid down on the bench, the guard came right over and helped me back to my cell.
5. In the afternoon on June 28, the prison doctor came and visited me in my cell and prescribed some liquid medicine and some pills for me to take. I took this medicine for 2 days.
6. On June 30, two wardens (one of them could speak English) came to my cell and gave me a letter written in Vietnamese sent to me by a Korean living in Vietnam named Mr. Yu. It had been written on June 14 and postmarked on June 16.

It said that all of the 15 Koreans under Chairman Lee Sun-Hung were doing well and that they would probably all be sent back to Korea within 2 months. It said that my Vietnamese friend, Janggam Tan (whom I could never remember meeting), was doing well.

The wardens asked me if I knew Mr. Yu very well and I could tell from our conversation that they wanted me to write a reply letter to him so I told them that while I might recognize Mr. Yu's face I did not know him well. I had heard several people question his character. I told them that I didn't know who Janggam Tan was. Therefore I didn't think that I would write a reply letter. The only people I wanted to write to were my wife in Korea and Chairman Lee who had sent me some packages. I said that since I didn't know Vietnamese I would like to write in Korean or in English. The warden told me to write a letter to Chairman Lee in English and he would send it right away. He told me to write the letter to my wife on July 15.

7. On July 1 my high fever broke and one of the guards helped me outside so I could sit on a shaded bench and breath some fresh air. I got up a few times and walked around in the sunlight. This continued for about an hour.

D. On July 1 I felt good enough to start eating gruel 2 meals a day and from July 4 on, I was able to eat rice again.

E. The letter from Mr. Yu was the first outside letter I had been able to receive since I had been imprisoned. In the past Chairman Lee had written official letters to me several times but I had never received them so they must have been confiscated by the guards. I couldn't understand why they had chosen Mr. Yu's letter, of all things, to be the first official letter I received. I had seen Mr. Yu meeting with some North Koreans during September 1975 and I didn't know how he had spent the year after that so I considered him to be a dangerous individual who had had contact with the North Koreans.

F. I wrote my July request for a package to Chairman Lee on July 4 and gave it to the warden to send.

G. On July 5 in the afternoon, the warden who had allowed me various special privileges while I was in cell block A, (like the privilege to exercise and bathe every day,) and some warden who I didn't know came to my cell, talked with me for about 15 minutes and left.

My former warden said that he hoped I recovered from my illness soon. At present he is working in cell block AH. I'm not sure what his motive was for visiting me.

H. On July 5 in the evening, the warden took me to a room with a television in it on the first floor and had me watch TV for about 2 hours. The station they were watching broadcast some Vietnamese news and then a Soviet film about how Hitler had attacked the USSR and been defeated in a counterattack by Stalin.

I couldn't understand anything that was said because I didn't speak Vietnamese or Russian but I could see Hitler and Stalin and the fighting and generally made out the story line. Several wardens and about 15 guards were watching with us. The wardens and I sat in chairs and the rest of the guards sat on the concrete floor and watched.

I. I was allowed to get some sunlight on July 6 in the morning.

J. On July 7 in the morning all of the prisoners on the first floor of cell block D had their hair cut. I hadn't had my hair cut in 48 days. They gave me a real short crew cut which makes me believe that I won't be released soon.

K. Presently I weigh about 61 kilograms.

L. I can tell that you have been sending money for the packages I have received. I am sorry for all of the trouble my family and I have caused you. It will soon be the rainy season. I hope that the president and all of you are in good health. Take care.

Pusoki

The above signature, Pusoki, is a code name for Minister Lee Tae-yong. It comes from the name of my third son Yon-soki and the Korean word for father Pu, thus meaning Soki's father, Pu soki.

On July 11 I wrote a letter to my wife. I told her about my illness and told her that from about March 23 on my molars had bothered me occasionally and had made it difficult to eat a couple of times. The molars on the right side had been sore for a couple of months and I hadn't been able to use them but now the molars and the gums on the left side were sore too, and very inflamed. I told her that if the prison authorities told me to write a letter to her I would have to put a lot of useless junk in it to get them to send it, so just to be aware of that and expect some mention of the special treatment I was receiving. I closed in a typical fashion with my greetings to the family.

Since I was already sending letters to my family through a secret courier I was not so worried about sending letters to them through the prison officials.

But one thing I had to consider was that if I refused to write to my family when the prison officials told me to, they might guess that there was some kind of secret communications network. In order to keep them from becoming suspicious, I thought it best to write the letters.

A secondary matter was that if I sent an official letter, the Korean government or the Korean Red Cross would use it to apply pressure on the Vietnamese by presenting it and the petitions of my family to the UN or the International Red Cross. So I decided to apply the above three rules when I was instructed by prison officials to write to my family.

On July 15 in the morning the warden told me that the permission given me earlier to write letters to my family had been taken back and once more I ended up having to spend my long term in prison, isolated, unable to write official letters to my family.

This, however, was no big problem. I was getting more and more confidence in the secret communications network each day. In the evening on July 15, feeling quite confident in the secret network, I finally wrote a letter to President Pak Chong Hui. I sent it the next day. It read as follows:

1977 July 15

Dear Mr. President,

I hope that you have been in good health and that all is well with your family.

I had a high temperature and was very sick from about June 24 to July 5. Now I am completely better and am spending my time here in good health.

I'm sure that you have already heard from the Foreign Minister, various cabinet ministers, and from embassy employees and civilians who returned to Korea from Vietnam about the more than two years of deprivation, affliction and adversity that I have suffered since 29 September 1975, so I won't write to you about all of that.

I shall never forget the letter I received through a secret courier last October 22 from Chairman Lee Sun-Hung. It said that the government had picked up the tab for the education of my children. Chairman Lee has rendered great meritorious service, more than any other civilian now or in the past, by helping in the control and speedy evacuation of the Koreans who were living in Vietnam, by establishing all sorts of communications networks with Korean prisoners here and by sending packages and letters to them.

On September 29, 1975 I began to feel very nervous about the threat posed to me by the secret negotiations going on between the Vietnamese Communists and the North Koreans. I felt as though something bad would happen very soon and sure enough they had already put their plan into effect. I went to the French consulate to request protection but it was no use. If worse came to worse I decided that I would commit suicide and I gave my last wishes to Secretary Shin Sang-Bun, who had formerly been head of general affairs at the embassy, and to Pastor Kim Sang-U, in case I did end up dying. It's a little bit embarrassing but I asked them to give my last wishes to you, Mr. President, since you had been my district commander in the army a long time ago. I'm sure they already reported all of this to you, but things have taken a turn for the better and I am now healthy and getting along well. As I think of the kindness you have already shown my family I can envision your determined and caring face and cannot help but shed a few manly tears.

I shall never forget your benevolence which is as tall as a mountain and as deep as the sea.



Luckily my children are very diligent. They are well behaved, are studying very hard and greatly appreciate your great benevolence. I am sure that as they grow up they will appreciate even more all that you have done for them.

I have awakened many times while imprisoned here hoping that all of this was just a dream. Several times I even thought that I might be lucky enough to be released in 2 or 3 days. Last year from about the middle of December until the middle of January, and from about the middle of March until the beginning of April there were indications that my release was imminent but this turned out not to be the case. My adversaries are backward, corrupt and selfrighteous and are generally depraved so I've learned not to pay too much attention to signs that I might soon be released. I just try patiently to make it through each day. I figure that I will make it back to my beloved homeland some day so I just try to remain healthy and sane.

For the first 2 months I stood before the gates of death ready to take my own life if I was dragged off to be sent to North Korea. I woke up each morning and sat in my cell with my hands folded in my lap, eyes closed, meditating and trying to rise above my concerns for life or death. During this time my weight dropped to 54 kilograms. The next 10 months I came down with various illnesses and had to hold on to life by sheer willpower. I then buried all of this into the past. Last year on September 24 I received a huge package of food, medicine, clothing, etc. from Chairman Lee Sun-Hung, of the Association of Koreans Living in Vietnam, and Mrs. Hoa. I have continued to receive packages from Chairman Lee and Mrs. Hoa which I'm sure were sent with the support of the Korean government (both monetary and spiritual support) and I have even received some good multiple vitamins from the Korean Ambassador in Thailand. My weight has increased about 10 kilograms and my health has continued to improve and even though this is still prison, compared to before, I am living the life of luxury.

This being the case I sincerely hope that you feel at ease about me and just concentrate your efforts on the more important things you have to do.

I cannot tell you how sorry I am for all of the anxiety which my misfortune has caused you, Mr. President.

The hottest part of summer is now approaching. I pray that God will continue to watch over you and that your family is all in good health. I must end here.

Humbly yours,

Lee Tae-Yong

The main building at Chihwa prison was 4 stories, like a junior high school building Korea. It was arranged like an octagon with 8 cell blocks, cell block A through H. The total number of inmates changed all the time but at its smallest was around 4,500, and at its largest (when the prison was so full that it couldn't hold one more prisoner) was 6,000.

Besides the main octagonal building, there was also a prison headquarters building, a kitchen, a hospital, a guard house, one building of special cells and an execution building.

Female prisoners were put in each cell block but there were so many of them that a hundred or so were put in a special two story building attached to the wall outside cell block D.

In the two or so years since the fall of South Vietnam, those prisoners being held in Chihwa prison were already as tired of prison life as they could be.

Some of the political prisoners who were held in isolation cells had already reached the limit of their physical and mental endurance.

Two of the political prisoners on the 2nd floor of cell block D, which is where I was, had gone crazy and made queer sounds, screaming, sobbing, making sounds like a cow, and sometimes laughing in such a horrible way that it sounded like their throats were splitting. This made the rest of us very uncomfortable.

From my cell it was less than 10 meters to the special building where the 100 or so female prisoners were kept. Among them was one woman who had gone crazy and would go into spasms several times a day screaming and raising hell and frantically pounding on the bars of her cell with her shoe.

This woman's symptoms were particularly bad and she would often have these fits at 3:30 or 4:00 in the morning. When she did, it was even worse because everything else was so quiet. When she had these fits in the early morning one of the other female prisoners would sometimes begin singing. Strangely enough, when she did, the woman having the fit would calm down and stop screaming. At first I thought that this must be an incantation of a shaman with a beautiful voice. Why else would the crazy lady stop screaming everytime this woman sang?

The song was not the incantation of a shaman, however. It was just some woman singing a Vietnamese song. It was a beautifully sad song as smooth as a string of pearls and the woman sang it with such feeling. Once she began the song it lasted 5 minutes.

Whenever I heard this woman sing it reminded me of what it must be like to hear the song of a famous flute player ringing out on a quiet moonlit night. It was almost intoxicating.

I almost felt like some ancient ancestor was trying to speak to me through this song:

The world is not a home where we can stay for long. The earth is like a boarding house full of temporary guests. The sun and the moon are frequent visitors and time is only a passer-by. A man's life is like a drop of dew that has formed on a leaf on an autumn tree. Life has no more substance than a ray of moonlight shining in a pool of water. The splendor of a chorus of flowers singing from the valleys of Mount Kuntong

soon disappear with the heartless wind. Compared to the limitless expanses of the universe and the eternal flow of time, the life of a man, fifty some odd years, is but a moment, but one moment in a dream.

A man who devotes himself to being virtuous and following the right way is lonely for a short while. Those who seek after power and influence will be sorrowful for time immemorial. Those who are farsighted think not of what can be seen only with the naked eye but think of what comes after death. Those who strive to live virtuous lives may suffer loneliness for a short time, but they will not be full of sorrow.

One day Ho Ban Kiet, the former army general said that the woman who sang the song was a beautiful young woman who looked about 17 years old.

One of the places where the prisoners of cell block D were taken to get some sunlight was the big road right in front of the special building housing the extra female prisoners and it was possible to look directly at them through the barb wire fence. Kiet said that one time when he was outside he had seen a 17 year old looking woman leaning on the bars in the hall outside her cell singing.

Outside of cell block A there was a row of trees where birds used to sometimes land and sing their plaintive song. Outside of cell block D, however, there were no trees so this beautiful young woman sang instead of the birds. She sang a plaintive human song.

On the morning of July 7 the warden gathered all of the prisoners on my floor from cell 1 to cell 4 and let them walk around in the shade near the cell block D office for about 10 minutes. He then had the 6 or so prisoners sit down on the ground and he gave one of them a page from a Vietnamese newspaper and had him read it out loud.

When he read this page out loud all of a sudden all the Vietnamese prisoners, who had long ago forgotten how to laugh or smile, broke out into applause and smiled for the first time in a long time, thus wrinkling up even more their already wrinkled faces. I couldn't help but be stunned at this sudden change. What could be going on?

The guards who had been standing next to us talking among themselves stopped and listened, also. All I could do was just stare at the happy faces of these Vietnamese prisoners.

After the one prisoner had finished reading the paper, the guard who was leading us back in had one of the prisoners who spoke English translate the articles for me.

The first article said that on July 20 the 5 members of the UN Security Council had voted unanimously to accept Vietnam into the UN. The prisoners had hastily jumped to the conclusion that now that Vietnam had been accepted into the UN, whether they wanted to or not, they would have to obey the UN constitution and let them go. This is why they had been so happy and had applauded so. This hope, too, turned out to be in vain. How could the

prisoners have known that the Vietnamese Communists would not even blink an eye and nonchalantly continue to hold all of their Korean diplomatic prisoners and the political prisoners from the former South Korean government? The prisoners were not gods and could not have known that the Communists would be so cruel.

The other article was about some instructions from the Vietnamese Workers' Party telling everyone they must live more austere and eat more wheat flour, potatoes, and kwaimi (a Vietnamese sweet potato) due to the poor harvest that year.

The North Vietnamese had militarily conquered and occupied the South but the farmers in the South did not work very well at gun point and the economy was not doing very well. Even though the prisoners' allotment of rice after the fall of South Vietnam had remained for a short time at the same level it had been before the fall (15 kilograms of rice a month for each prisoner), by November 1975 this had dropped to 13 kilograms, by 1976 to 11 kilograms, then 9 kilograms and now it had been cut even lower so rations had to be supplemented with potatoes, kwaimi, and flour.

According to the secret letters from Chairman Lee, the Koreans who were still living in Vietnam from 1976 to July 30, 1977, had been receiving 9 kilograms of rice per person per month distributed through the Korean Federation office in Saigon. From July 1, however, this had been cut by Vietnamese officials to 1 kilogram of rice, and 3 kilograms of potatoes per person per month. This was not enough staple for the Koreans to live on so the Chinese lady, Madame Wang and several other people friendly to the Koreans sacrificed some of their own supplies and supplemented the Korean Association's supply, which was supposed to last until September, with about 700 kilograms of their own rice. There were shortages not only of rice in the city but also of most of the daily necessities and the people were panic stricken. If the people had been free as they had been under the other government there would have already been many hundreds or thousands of demonstrations and the government would have already changed hands several times over this problem. But under the military dictatorship of the Vietnamese Communists, the power of the gun was too strong and the people couldn't even squirm, let alone scream.

The strong winds of the rice shortage blew into Chihwa prison and from July 22 to July 29 all that we had for breakfast was half a bowl of rice and 2 cakes of wheat dough. For dinner we had only 3 cakes of wheat dough and no rice. Things got worse after this and continued to be bad for a long time.

On July 30, 1977 I wrote my 10th report to the Korean Foreign Minister and included details about all that had been happening. The whole report read as follows:

1977 July 30

To the Foreign Minister,

A. Following is a report of what has happened since my last report:

B. On July 9 in the evening, under the supervision of the warden I watched about 2 hours of TV. Aside from me there were 5 wardens, and about 15 model prisoners who served as guards or nurses.

We watched about 20 minutes of domestic news mainly about agricultural developments. After that there was about 10 minutes of international news mainly showing different scenes about what was going on in Africa. After that, for about 2 hours, there was a program entitled "The Vietnamese under U.S. Rule". It showed the oppression of the police under the former Thieu government, government corruption, illegal killings and said that all of this was controlled from behind the scenes by American advisors.

C. On July 12 and July 19 we were allowed to get some sun for about 15 minutes each time.

D. On July 25 I was allowed to go on a walk for about 15 minutes with about 5 Vietnamese prisoners. After walking around for a bit the warden came up to us with a newspaper and had one of the inmates read it to us for about 5 minutes. The warden had one of the inmates translate two of the articles into English for me. The two articles contained the following:

1. The five members of the UN Security Council had allowed Vietnam to join the UN.
2. Because of a bad harvest this year there had been a shortage of rice and the people would have to go on an austerity campaign and supplement their diet with more wheat flour, potatoes and other things.

E. On July 16 on the 2nd floor about 20 prisoners were moved out and transferred somewhere else and about 15 prisoners from somewhere else were transferred here. Previously I referred to this floor as the first floor as the French would, but it is actually the second floor according to Korean reckoning so that is what I will call it from now on. About 10 of the 20 prisoners who were transferred from this floor were moved to political prisoner detention centers (concentration camps) and the other 10 were dispersed to cells in other places. The second wife of former General Le Ban Gim was among those who were transferred to a detention center.

F. Because of a shortage of rice, from July 22 to July 24, for breakfast we were fed one half bowl of rice and 2 cakes (about the size of one Chinese egg roll) or dough made from flour and potatoes, and for dinner we received 3 cakes of dough. On the 29th in the evening, and in the morning on the 30th we were given about one half bowl of rice and about 5 pieces of kwaimi, a Vietnamese sweet potato about 7 centimeters long.

F. Under the excellent supervision of Chairman Lee, the Koreans remaining in Vietnam have been getting along without any problems. Up until June 30 they had been receiving through the Korean Association office about 9 kilograms of rice per person per month. However, because of shortages in the supply of government rice, from July 1 on, each person's ration was cut back to 1 kilogram of rice, and 3 kilograms of potatoes. To make up for this very low supply of

staples Madame Wang and some other people friendly to Koreans sacrificed some of their own supplies and supplimented the Korean Association's supply, (which was supposed to last until September) with about 700 kilograms of their own rice.

H. Since our secret courier, Ong Ba, was released from prison I have been temporarily cut off from communicating with Counselor Suh and Counselor Ahn. As of July 8 I have been unable to confirm that they are in good health but I assume that they are.

I. I continue to receive packages from Chairman Lee and Mrs. Hoa Wang, and I am continuing to gain some of the weight I lost when I was so sick. Now I weigh about 63 kilograms.

J. There are absolutely no signs that I will be released soon. My trips outside have been cut back to about half of what they were in cell blocks A and B.

K. I am continually grateful to everyone, the President, and all the members of the cabinet, for all the kindness that they have extended to my family and to the families of Counselors Suh and Ahn. I pray for your health and that with the help of God you can still do many great things for our country.

L. All of the Koreans that are left here in Vietnam are very grateful for all of your physical, spiritual and monetary support. This of course includes the \$3,000.00 which you have budgeted for them. They will not soon forget this kindness.

M. I pray for the boundless development of our fatherland and end my report here.

Pusoki

On the first of August I heard some new word about the release of foreign prisoners which I thought would be useful to our country's diplomatic efforts to have us released so on the evening of August 10 I wrote the following report to the RO Foreign Minister.

1977 August 10

To the Foreign Minister,

A. On August 6 in the afternoon an assistant warden who has always treated me kindly and who speaks a little English came to my cell and told me the following. He said that this was special news:

The Vietnamese government has decided that the prison terms for all foreign prisoners in Vietnamese prisons are to be between 26 and 28 months. When this time is up all of the foreign prisoners such as the Korean, Malaysian, Hong Kong and Japanese prisoners, will be released and

sent home. Since you are a high official of an enemy government you will be released after the full 28 months. In other words you will be released in 6 months.

B. I cannot confirm what this assistant warden has told me. I cannot communicate with the prison officials who are higher than this because they can't speak English or French and I don't speak any Vietnamese. Chairman Lee and Madame Hoa Wang are trying to confirm this on the outside.

C. If what the assistant warden said is true, then Counselor Suh and Counselor Ahn will be released no later than October 18 this year. They might possibly be released sooner, sometime around the Vietnamese holiday on September 2 or possibly shortly after the admittance of Vietnam into the UN is approved by the UN General Assembly.

D. Please try to confirm, through various diplomatic channels if what the assistant warden told me is true and if it is please try to take what diplomatic measures you can to make it so that I can be released at the same time as Counselors Ahn and Suh.

E. Since I can easily endure for another 6 months you don't need to worry a lot if your diplomatic efforts concerning me are turned down by the Vietnamese authorities. It's just that I would like to be released with Counselors Ahn and Suh.

F. On August 1 and August 9 I was allowed to get a little sunshine and on August 4 I was allowed to take a walk.

G. Since July 31 my morning and evening meals have consisted of either half a bowl of rice and 3 kwaimi or half a bowl of rice and 5 or 6 small sweet potatoes.

H. Ever since my illness, officials here in cell block D have been giving me an extra bucket of hot water once in the morning and once at night. I have been using it for drinking water and to bathe. They might have been instructed to do this by someone higher up.

I. From August 5 to August 8 about 8 prisoners were moved or transferred from the 2nd floor of cell block D. Now there are about 27 prisoners on this floor. This is very few compared to the 90 prisoners which the 2nd floor of cell block D can hold.

J. On August 2 I received an official package of food, medicine, clothing and daily necessities from Chairman Lee and Hoa Wang weighing about 50 kilograms.

K. I am very healthy and weigh about 64 kilograms. I am continuing to improve and by the end of the year I expect to have gained back the 4 kilograms which I lost when I was sick. This will put me back up to 65 kilograms.

L. My body is here in prison but my heart is in my free homeland, Korea. I get all choked up whenever I think about the President or his cabinet members.

M. I am determined to make it through whatever hardships or trials still face me and to be true to my homeland so you don't need to worry about that. Just take care of your own health.

N. As far as I now Counselors Suh and Ahn are in good health so you don't need to worry about them either.

Pusoki

On August 13 I wrote my 8th letter to my wife from prison.

On August 20, through a secret courier, I received a package with some dried anchovies, a bag full of a powdered side dish made with things like garlic, soup boullion powder, and sesame seed salt, a bag of misu powder (a drink made from the flour of several cooked dried grains), some antibiotics, some vitamins, and some Chinese medicine, all of which was sent by my wife in Seoul.

Inside the bag of misu powder there was a little piece of paper that said "when you are hungry take one spoonful of this, mix it with water and drink." This was the first food my family had ever sent from Seoul. I couldn't have been happier.

A secret letter from Chairman Lee came in the afternnoon on August 24. It said that on August 23 he had been given permission to visit Counselor Suh Pyong-Ho and Counselor Ahn Hui-Wan here at prison. Several other Korean and Vietnamese visitors accompanied Chairman Lee to cell block AH to make the visits and deliver some packages. One of the Korean diplomats looked relatively healthy and in good spirits but the other one, compared to how he looked during the last visit on June 4, looked like he had gained a little weight but had a very bad color and looked like he was really suffering. It looked like he was mentally exhausted and it made everyone who had gone with Chairman Lee to make the visits very sad. The letter said that when the visit was over and Chairman Lee had returned back to his residence he was so worried that he couldn't sleep and had written me this letter. He asked me to do what I could.

I was sure that Chairman Lee's assessment of the situation was accurate since he had been able to directly see and talk with the two of them. As the Korean saying goes "A picture is worth a thousand words." That night I wrote a secret letter to the concerned Korean diplomat in cell block AH asking him if he was suffering some kind of indescribable mental anguish or if he had some illness and telling him to be firm and hold on. I then wrote to the Foreign Minister.

In this report I told about Chairman Lee's visit to the 2 Korean diplomats and requested that the Korean government make every effort to have the discourage suffering one be released early sometime in September.

A few days later I received a reply through Chairman Lee from this aforementioned junior diplomat. He said that there was nothing particularly wrong with him but that he had had bad diarrhea on the day Chairman Lee had visited him.



When I confirmed after the fact that a Japanese prisoner, Suzuki, from the first floor of cell block D and the Malaysian Rim Saeng Pim had been released and I even heard a rumor that the Koreans would be released soon I sent reports to that effect on August 22, 24 and September 3. I expected that at least 2 of the Korean diplomats would be released but things just didn't turn out.

On September 10 I received an urgent message from Chairman Lee. It said that one of the wardens was a little suspicious and snooping around a bit and had changed some of the guards around, so in the future I would have to be very careful about sending reports to Seoul and writing to him.

I knew that I had been writing a little too often so I decided to cut back. It would especially be bad if it were found out that I had been sending reports to the Korean Foreign Minister. I would be even more isolated and watched so I decided to especially cut back on these reports.

After the 14th report which I sent the Foreign Minister on September 9, I tried to just sit tight and be more self-controlled and I decided to only write if it were an emergency.

Almost in answer to Chairman Lee's warning, one day a warden who worked somewhere else came to my cell and went through my things.

However, he didn't find anything and left. I had already had a premonition that this would happen and had already sent two volumes of my diary off to Chairman Lee. The diary I was using at the time I hid during the day deep inside the quilt which had been sent to me in a package and the warden had only looked through my bags and had not stuck his hand deep inside the quilt. As for the letters which I received from Chairman Lee, as soon as I received them I would bury them in my powdered milk and then during siesta time or whenever it was safe I would take them out and after carefully reading them and jotting down a few quick cryptic notes about their content I would burn them. So there was nothing of them to find.

On August 14 when I was out getting some sun near the open air water tank for cell block E, one of the wardens pointed a camera at me and took a picture. This picture was eventually passed through Chairman Lee to my family in Seoul.

On October 22 I received my second letter from my wife. She said that my sons had grown a lot over the past two years and that they were all healthy and studying well. She said that they went to church every Sunday with her and prayed for their father.

No matter what I had to go through I wanted my wife and my children to be happy.

One the wall directly across from my cell there was a board which had the names of the prisoners in each cell. Since Lieutenant Nam couldn't write he had one of the prisoners do the writing for him. This prisoner had formerly been the director of the Saigon Tan San Nut International Airport under the Thieu government. Whenever I went to draw water I would glance at this board and I

had a vague notion of who was in each cell. The number of prisoners was always changing. Sometimes there were a lot and sometimes there weren't as many.

As soon as the UN Security Council had approved the entrance of Vietnam into the UN the Vietnamese Communists had undertaken a vast reclassification of all of the political prisoners on the 2nd floor of cell block D.

In this cell block there had been imprisoned Catholic priests, officers in the Wahau religious sects anti-communist guerillas, former officers in the anti-communist forces of the Thieu government and some hard core anti-communists. All together there were 73 of them. There were 3 of them in each of these cells, which were a little over 1 pyong (3.954 square yards). I was the only one in a cell by himself.

These 73 prisoners were divided into 4 groups.

1. Those to be executed.
2. Those to be transported to prisons in North Vietnam.
3. Those to be transferred to other prisons in South Vietnam.
4. Those to be transferred to different cells at Chihwa prison.

Those prisoners sentenced to death would probably all be executed by the end of 1977. Those who were to be transferred to somewhere else would probably spend the rest of their life in prison unless they converted to communism. Even if they did say that they had converted to communism they would not be released right away. They would be released only after being held for a long time and being transferred from prison to prison to see if they had really changed. If not then they would be sent off to a forced labor camp. Among these 73 political prisoners 5 of those who were sentenced to death were actually executed. They were 5 young anti-communist guerilla leaders of the Wahau sect. They were dragged off during the night to the execution building and disappeared like the morning dew, leaving only their sorrow and their desire to be free.

The warden who had been in charge of the 2nd floor of cell block D at the time was Lieutenant Nam. The guard who was in charge of delivering the meals had been arrested trying to escape to another country. He had been a butcher and while he was a Vietnamese citizen, he was of Chinese descent. He had a typical sounding Chinese name, Jin Gwang Ruk. The male nurse who worked in the medical office had been arrested on the open sea with his family trying to escape to another country. He had been a ear, nose and throat doctor. His name was Bui Hak Than.

There were three places where I went to get some sun. One was in the court where the outside water tank was for cell block E. One of them was the court next to cell block D. And the third one was on the road that ran in front of the special building which housed the 100 extra women. The guards who supervised the walks outside decided where to take the prisoners each time.

When we went to where the women were they often gathered to look at us out of curiosity. Some of the women would lean between the bars and stare at me from about a meter away. I was the only foreign political prisoner that they saw. The women would look at me like I was something special and smile and talk to me sometimes. But it was forbidden to talk to them, though we couldn't do more than share brief greetings.

If I stood in the sunlight and did some Taekwando the women would be very interested and watch. If I jumped and did a side kick or a front kick or a turning kick at one of the banana leaves along the side of the road the women would clap and yell and say I had done well. The warden in charge wouldn't stop the women from clapping or cheering. In fact he looked on, too, as though he was very interested in my Taekwando. This didn't last very long, though, either.

Around the end of October the 100 or so women who were housed in that building were reclassified and either sent off to some other prison or sent to a labor camp.

On October 26 when Pastor Rok, Pastor Tan and I went out for some fresh air to the road in front of the building that had housed all of those women, the women had already disappeared along with the sound of the trucks that carried them away. All that were left were about 5 women who looked like guards wearing shabby blue uniforms. They were cleaning up around the entrance to the building. Two of these women were going through each other's tangled hair and grabbing the lice that were there and giving them to each other.

During the evening of the last day of October I was trying to figure out when I might be released. I was looking at the calendar I had made of when I had received packages and when I had been allowed to go outside. I took notes on the calendar and came up with the following chart.

Times I was allowed outside

1975 October	none
November	none
December	none
1976 January	none
February	none
March	none
April	none
May	none
June	none
July	1 time (27th)
August	2 times (11, 25)
September	none
October	3 times (1, 12, 21)
November	2 times (11, 22)
December	6 times (4, 10, 16, 25, 27, 29)

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1977 January	3 times (8, 14, 26)
February	3 times (1, 21, 28)
March	6 times (8, 11, 16, 23, 28, 31)
April	7 times (5, 11, 16, 19, 22, 25, 28)
May	7 times (2, 5, 9, 12, 16, 19, 20)
June	3 times (16, 19, 20)
July	3 times (1, 6, 19)
August	4 times (1, 6, 13, 27)
September	8 times (6, 8, 10, 12, 14, 16, 19, 23)
October	6 times (1, 3, 7, 10, 13, 26)

Total of 64 times

[Explanation]: Each time I was allowed to be out of my cell for a total of about 15 minutes so taking into account the time it took me to go to and from the exercise site I really only spent about 10 minutes outside.

Therefore in 2 years and 1 month, I had actually only been allowed outside for 10 minutes x 64 trips = 640 minutes.

However, some of the good guards and good wardens would sometimes extend this by 3 to 5 minutes. I estimate that this extra time in the sun might amount to 120 throughout my time here; so in 2 years and 1 month my skin has only received a total of 640 minutes + 120 minutes = 760 minutes, in other words 12 hours and 40 minutes of sunlight.

This doesn't even amount to the amount of sunlight that a Korean farmer gets in one day.

#### Packages

1975 October	none
November	none
December	6th (10 kg), 31st (15 kg)
1976 January	none
February	28th (10 kg)
March	none
April	none
May	none
June	none
July	none
August	none
September	24th (50 kg)
October	5th (25 kg)
November	none
December	14th (45 kg)

1977 January	none
February	16th (30 kg)
March	15th (20 kg)
April	none
May	none
June	9th (80 kg)
July	none
August	2nd (50 kg)
September	none
October	21st (50 kg)

[Explanation]: About one-fourth of all of these packages was split up among the guards.

I took these two charts and tried to figure out when I would be released but this being the only thing I had to work with I couldn't reach any conclusions.

On November 1 in the morning, another change took place on the 2nd floor of cell block D where there were now only about 20 prisoners. Pastors Rok and Tan who had indomitably stuck to their anti-communist beliefs were transferred somewhere. According to one guard they had been transferred to cell block E but this was never confirmed.

That afternoon one of the guards whispered in my ear that in the morning on November 2 I would be transferred to cell block H. Shortly thereafter a secret letter and a boiled chicken arrived from Chairman Lee. He, too, had found out that I would be transferred to cell block H. He had found out from a Vietnamese Air Force officer.

In preparation for the move, I sent off the notebook I had been using as a diary to Chairman Lee through the secret network. I gathered up my things and set aside a pile of clothing, daily necessities, food, etc., as a parting gift to the guards to whom I owed favors.

Cell block H was next to cell block A. Cell block A had been built in a peculiar way. The outside of it went up in a strange way so it was called cell block AH.

When Counselor Ahn and Counselor Suh had been moved from cell block A they had not been transferred to Hanoi but had rather been moved to cell block D. In May 1976 they had been moved back to cell block AH and they had remained there ever since. I had been held in cell block A, B and D in cells all by myself for 25 months. Now I was going back to cell block AH where I could get some sunlight every day and where I could see the sky from behind the bars to my cell.

I lit a fire in my little can burner to cook my last meal in a cell alone. I used plastic bags and old rags for fuel. I put 2 cans on either side of this and for a pot I used a rather large can from some American product. I poured water into the pot and put in the two legs from the boiled chicken which Chairman Lee had sent me and let it boil so I could put in some Ramyon noodles.

While I was waiting for it to boil I thought about the last 25 months which I had spent alone.

I thought to myself "I have lived for the past 2 years and 1 month as not even a dog should have to live."

I had not been guarded by dogs when I was in cell block A and B but in cell block D I had. At night they turned trained dogs into the hall that would guard the prisoners and bark fiercely if the prisoners touched the cell bars or the walls. When this happened the guards on duty would come and check things out.

On the 2nd floor of cell block D I was always the first prisoner to go for water.

One night one of the guard dogs that had been left in the hall during the night had gone to the bathroom in the hall and I didn't see it when I went for water so I tracked it back into my cell. I remembered how hard it had been to wash the smell away from the concrete floor.

I also thought of the pale faces of the young Wahau sect officers who, on the day before they were to be executed, had tried to escape when they were let out to get water. They had been caught at the end of the hall on the floor below and brought back up to their cells.

In the midst of remembering these kinds of things before too long the chicken soup began to boil. I put a few Ramyon noodles in the soup and stirred it around. Then I put out the flame in the burner and sat down on the concrete floor and ate the hot chicken soup. It tasted so good!

After I finished washing the dishes, I again went through my things and then lay down pulling the mosquito net over me. The pillow was a bit hard but it was alright. I had never been allowed to have a pillow sent to me so I learned how to sew and made my own pillow while I was in prison.

When I thought about the lonely days that I had sat there all by myself sewing together the pieces of cloth to make the pillow, I smiled at myself. I thought to myself "When I am released I can quit being a diplomat and be a tailor instead."

I also thought about the warden of cell block D. I would be leaving him tomorrow. When I had come into his jurisdiction he had called a meeting of 10 or so guards and said that I was a very dangerous South Korean Anti-Communist counter-revolutionary and he told them to watch me especially carefully. However, about 3 months later when this warden was with a couple of other wardens and the subject of the South Korean had come up he had said, "These high officials are different. He is really great."

Some officer had heard this conversation and had reported it to Chairman Lee who had carefully bit by bit passed it on to me.

The head of cell block D was tall, had eyes like a Korean and was rather handsome. He had never once approached me to talk. However, he had inspected my cell several times. Why had he said this about me? Was it that I treated the wardens well that had treated me well and I treated poorly the ones who treated me poorly? Or perhaps did he know how I had stuck to my beliefs for the 2 years and 1 month that I had been held.

Thinking about these things I soon drifted off to sleep.

At 6:00AM on the morning of November 11, 1977 Lieutenant Nam and an interpreter came to my cell and said the following:

"Today Mister South Korean you are leaving this cell block and going to cell block AH. You will probably go there for a while and then be released and go home. You must leave everything which is not yours here. Two guards will help you with your bags. I wish you the best of luck."

I had been here for more than 2 years but I had never had any warden talk to me so respectfully or politely.

With this gentlemanly greeting Lieutenant Nam left. His assistant soon came with 4 guards.

Two of the guards were supposed to clean my cell when I left it and 2 of the guards were to help me carry my bags from cell block D to cell block AH. The Chinese butcher Jin Gwang Rok took half of the bags and the other guard took the other half.

When we arrived at the office for cell block AH the gray haired gentleman who had been there before was sitting in the chair waiting.

#### Chapter 4: The 38th and 17th Parallels

The supervisor of the AH building was the old police captain from North Vietnam. His hot-tempered cold personality did not draw good reputation from the prisoners. However, he was not too bad. He was the supervisor of the A and B buildings in which I was an isolated prisoner for 596 days.

The longer you know, the more comfortable relationships you expect. He was warmly greeting me. When his men inspected my baggage, my glass case was dropped to the floor. He picked it up and handed it to me. When his men took my tissues for bathroom use from my baggage, he gave me old newspapers for the tissues.

After the inspection, I was guided upstairs to Room #1, AH building. I spent 25 months in an isolated prison cell.

Each room has its captain or senior prisoner. Room #1's captain was Wan who assigned me to a corner toward the hallway. An interpreter for me was Le Manh Hong who was educated at the MIT and served as Deputy Minister of economic planning during the Thien administration. We met each other in 1974 and 1975 for the Korean-Vietnam Economic Conferences and other economic cooperation meetings. Be we could not recognize each other in the prison. He lost weight, had a beard and only wore underwear. I was not different from him.

Our looks were all different, but our voices were not. Wan through Hong's interpretation explained all the rules and regulations in the room. All were orders to me. He treated me as his own man.

La Trung Nghia, Deputy Captain under Wan recorded my name, birthday, occupation, address in Vietnam, date of arrest, reasons for the arrest and arresting agency.

I placed a rug in the designated corner and went out to the outdoor water tank. I was watched. I met Mr. Ahn, a Korean council. It was a reunion after 2 years and 5 months. He maintained his old look. I was happy to see him, but could not express it, because I had to follow the prison rule.

I returned to the room with the buckets of water. There was a vast blue sky outside the iron-barred window.

Somebody shouted. Then we all went out to the hallway. Breathing, exercising, walking and talking were allowed.

Two hundred prisoners in 4 rooms were there: former Prime Minister Phan Huy Quat, former Presidential candidate Nguyen Dinh Quat, former Senator and cabinet member, Ho Van Cham, former education and public information Minister Ngo Khac Tinh, second cousin of President Thien, his brother Ngo Khac Tinh, (same



English name) who was a former Senator and Minister of Justice, two former Colonels who were in charge of the prison, former Police Commissioner, former Congressmen, former Supreme Court Justice, former journalists, former professors, teachers, bankers, policemen, students, merchants, petty officers, religious leaders and farmers.

I knew many of them because I stayed in Saigon for the last 9 years and 5 months as a Korean diplomat.

Strolling hours were also scheduled in the afternoon. Twenty minutes to one hour depending upon the supervisor's mood.

I enjoyed sunbathing in the hallway. I would take off my undershirt. I was happy with the sunshine every afternoon.

This was a paradise compared to the solitary confinement. I found my nail cutter was stolen. The inspectors in the morning took it. Hong told me that the inspectors were thieves. I heard from him that Mr. Suh, another Korean consul, had been sent downstairs before I moved to this room. The next morning I found Mr. Suh. He looked old and half white-haired. Our distance was 7 to 8 meters. I asked him to give me one nail cutter if he had two. He threw one to me but I could not reach it. One kind prison guard brought it up to me. After a few days he was moved to another place.

Several days passed. One morning I took a quick shower and got a bucketful of water. Then a small guard talked to me. He took the bucket from me. I spoke to him in English, "What's the matter with you?" He pushed me into the warehouse and locked me up. Soon a man came to the dark room and he explained to me that I had violated the rule not to take a shower in the morning. He was a former South Vietnam army captain. He spoke English fluently. He further explained that lock-up was the guard's legitimate decision.

I saw other prisoners taking showers as I did, showering at the water tank before they carried the buckets to their rooms, so I contested the lock-up.

He continued:

"The guard is the bad guy, really a bad guy. He wants us to give him money or something like it. Former Congressman Phong who showered before me was not sent to this place, because he bribed the guard. Phong was the owner of the Khadina Hotel on Nguyen Hue Street. The new government confiscated the hotel, but his wife continued to operate the swimming pool. I heard she was still earning 2,000 dong monthly. He still has gold, silver and other jewelry. His wife sent him many things so he could afford to give soaps, clothes and food to the guards. The guards took care of him. The guard expects us to bribe him. For Cabinet Member Ho Van Cham was sent to this place because he didn't bribe the guard.

I was angry. First of all, I should not be here. I should be treated as a diplomat. A quick shower should not be a severe penalty like this. After about 20 minutes lock-up, the door was opened. Immediately I shouted:

"You S.O.B., why did you lock me up?"

He explained that I had violated the rule.

You S.O.B., you know I have been here for just a few days. If you have that kind of rule, first you should explain to me." I almost hit him. He pointed to a guard. "Look! this guy tried to hit me."

There was the Deputy Supervisor of the AH building. He was Captain of "dog face" from Vin Ding Province. His nickname was "dog face." He was close to Lt-Gen. Dao Luong, the prison Commander.

I explained why I was angry. The "dog face" seemed to understand why I was angry.

Warrant Officer Dien informed the supervisor's decision to give me "privileged shower" every morning from November 14. I was also privileged to have hot meals from the kitchen, but I did not use that privilege

Those privileges were hoped to be a sign of an early release. Life in the AH building was different from the A, B and D buildings of solitary confinement.

At 5:00 you must get up and roll up the rug. All prisoners should sit down in 4 rows on the concrete floor. The room Captain should stand up and report to the guard.

"Report to the guard: Room number \_\_\_\_\_. All (number) of prisoners, accident none, present (number)!" The guard checked the number through the bars. He moved on if that report was right.

After the roll-call, the guard opened the door. Then all the prisoners did cleaning work and carrying bucketfuls of water. I belonged to the water carrying team. I got 4 plastic buckets from President Lee, (Korean Association). I used 2 and let my team use 2. There were 6 aluminum buckets in the prison room, but more was necessary to be efficient.

There were 2 drums [of petroleum] in the room. We should fill these 2 drums. Fifty prisoners used the water for cleaning dishes, washing their faces and even washing their anal. Everyone wore only underwear, but I wore short pants and an undershirt.

The prisoners in the AH building had the right to receive once a month, gifts from outside relatives and friends, so they were better off compared to the solitary confinement prisoners. Carrying water from the outdoor water tank and then upstairs was good exercise for me. Three-round carrying. I also had a shower, privileged shower every day. I was free after water carrying duty so I would sit down on my mat and walk in the hallway.

The guard who locked me up in the warehouse became himself a prisoner.

For drinking water, 2 roommates went to the distributors and brought hot water and then 4 roommates distributed it to all the inmates. Each inmate received 1 liter. After drinking water distribution, another call was for food containers: 4 roommates carried those containers to their room's hallway. Then a team of 10 to 12 distributed meals to each inmate. After meal time, 2 brought the containers to the outdoor water tank, cleaned them there, and returned them downstairs.

The duty was rotational. Former Prime Ministers and former soldiers were all equal. Water-carrying duty was not made to those who were over 70, but they were doing small things.

After returning dishes to downstairs, room was again closed. Inmates should clean their own dishes and enjoy a nap unit 1:00 in the afternoon.

In the afternoon, walking hours, drinking water distribution, food distribution and roll-call at 4:00. Roll-call in the afternoon was the same as in the morning except the sitting in the hallway. After the roll-call, inmates went inside the room in 2 rows in orderly fashion. The last person was the room captain. Then the guard locked the bar up. The guard continued the same in other rooms.

From there, inmates enjoyed chess and domino games and talking until 9:00 in the evening. Drum beating was used for getting up and sleeping hours in the first 2 years under the Communist's rule in this Chiwha Prison. Recently, the drum was replaced by a bell. The bell told us the time to get up and to go to bed.

On Sunday, the officer Mr. Ahn was close to, was on duty. He organized volleyball teams and games. Mr. Ahn was one of the 20 players.

He came upstairs and allowed me to meet Mr. Ahn. I was a spectator. It was the first time we talked in Korean after 2 years and 5 months. I could not start our conversation. It was not easy.

October 10, 1955: That was the last day of speaking in Korean through an interpreter when I was interrogated by the high cheek-boned officer and his group. Ten days ago I said "hello" to Mr. Ahn and later to Mr. Ahn.

Mr. Ahn was O.K. He probably talked to Suh, Choi Ki Sun, Lee Sang Whan, Kim Jong Oak in Korean and Lee Sune Hong, President of Korean Association, and Lee Jung Ohn who visited him.

"Mr. Ahn, it is strange I cannot freely talk Korean."

It took 15 minutes. Then I was free in our conversation which included our prison lives.

The volleyball game was over in an hour. We took showers at the water tank and returned to each room. We had to separate.

On November 15, President Lee sent me a gift package amounting to 50 kg. Le Manh Hong translated my letter to him on November 10. I was entitled to receive gifts once a month. Haircutting was frequently every 20 to 30 days.

Thirty minutes of sunbathing made my skin return to normal color. The AH building life was much better, uncomparatively better than the isolated life in the A, B and D buildings. But it was still prison life. Fifty inmates occupied 55 cm for individual sleeping space. While sleeping, one could kick the next person or touch the next one's body.

Four showers a week was not enough in the tropical zone. Foul smell with cigar smoke made me vomit. One toilet for many prisoners was a pain to those who suffered from diarrhea. From 4:20 in the morning, the toilet was the busiest spot. No one was allowed to occupy the toilet long.

Twenty pyung for 53 people was dense, and very dense if the space was allotted to the toilet area.

Inmates often fought for the interference into their "territories", and measured the length of the interference by a string. Drinking water also caused tension whenever someone wanted a little more. Then a court was called for settling the dispute. Those who were guilty were sentenced for cleaning the toilet for a few days or for moving to an uncomfortable spot.

Every Saturday a review meeting was held. During the meeting, I looked at lizards on the wall eating butterflies or caterpillars and was indulged in wild fantasy. The meeting was boring. Free hours from 5:00 to 9:00 were good. Anti-Communism was not tolerated in free hours. Only praising Communism was allowed.

The prison authorities kept their spies in each room. They were called "antenna." My room's antenna was Wan, senior inmate. He had several assistants, 4 assistant spies in 4 rooms upstairs. Inmates called Wan a "fox" or "monkey devil." Wan was a young intelligence agent for Ho Chi Minh in the French Army.

The French left Vietnam in 1954. Two Vietnams were drawn by the 17th parallel. Then he worked for South Vietnam. South Vietnam fell to North Vietnam on April 30, 1975.

He left the city of Hue and came to Saigon. Then he reported all the Anti-Communist leaders to the Communists. He even reported his own father-in-law in order to have his chance.

His past record was disclosed and he himself was sent to this prison. He approached Warrant Officer Dien and made him trust. He was a fox.

He could not understand English so that I and Le Manh Hong could talk freely. He and his assistants could not catch all our conversations. I talked to many inmates in the night. I discussed the causes of South Vietnam's falling with the Supreme Court Judge, Congressmen, Presidential body guard, government officials, journalists, doctors, architects, TV anchor man, bankers, soap

company President, soliders, former Vietcong financial officier and religious leaders. I also discussed the present "mind" and future "escaping" from the prison plan with them.

On my left, Mr. Coi slept and on my right Mr. Duong. Both were Anti-Communists. Coi, 57, was former Civil Defense Administrator and Duong, 52, as a Catholic leader. I shared my food, canned meat and cookies with them and 8 others near my "bed." Cold patients took my aspirins. Toothache inmates took my aspirins.

Wan one day asked me for some soap through Le Manh Hong. I gave him one in order to keep good relations with him. My secret network to Mr. Ahn and to Mr. Lee Sune Hong, President of the Korean Association should be preserved at any cost.

Wan didn't receive any gifts from his family in the last 12 months. Inmates guessed he was forgotten by all his relatives. But he asked other inmates to give their belongings to him. His clothes were good. He smoked cigars. He ate meat, vegetables and fruits.

Wan kept Mr. Chang, a Chinese-Vietnamese folk doctor, and shared Chang's food. Chang also cleaned his dishes. Wan's "power authority" was generated from his closeness to Warrant Officer Dien who was responsible for the security of the AH building and the chief guard of the 2nd floor. Dien was an underground Communist agent. The Diem government arrested him and sent him to the prison for 10 years at Conson. He returned to the jungle and became a Vietcong policeman in charge of Vietnam POWs.

After the Communist victory, he was sent to this prison and he revenged. He sent political prisoners to isolated cells, banned outside gifts to some prisoners, and made some worse. He was the most notorious officer with Lt. Jhak of the Education Department.

Wan reported to Dien on all four room affairs on the 2nd floor. He received reports from his assistants in each room during free walking hours.

Wan received good gifts from other inmates. He was a powerful prisoner.

Col. Tran Van Hai was the prison Commander when South Vietnam fell to the Communists. He was educated at the U.S. Army Staff College. This prison had four Commanders since the Diem administration. All four were prisoned here and then 2 were transferred to North Vietnam, and 2 remained here.

Col. Hai had good clothes. Wan took them from him. Wan altered them for his measurement.

Inmates made a conspiracy to kill Wan with WP130 telephone line during his sleep. That conspiracy was known to him. Wan reported to Dien and removed all the wires for setting up mosquito nets. That was a story before I came to this place.

While Wan was playing dominos and his "antenna" playing chess, I wrote my diary. I pretended to study English. I should make it secret from Coi and Duong. My place was in the corner so no one paid attention to my diary writing.

November 20, 1977: It was my 3rd birthday in the prison. I was 52.

Thirty-six days after moving into the AH building, the guard asked the inmates to dress up and sit up in 4 rows. It was the morning of December 6 after my water carrying and cleaning jobs were done.

Five guards arrived. The Deputy Supervisor of the AH building made a short speech. Lt. Jhack of the Education Department called inmates' roll and checked their addresses. I was ready to give my home address in Saigon, 171 Dudo St., Ho Chi Minh City. He didn't call my name and moved on to the next room.

I didn't know what was going on. Something was going on. Le Manh Hong approached me and told me:

"Minister Rhee, you should pack. Those who are not called should move to another place. You will be freed. I enjoyed meeting with you. Good luck!" Hong helped me pack. I gave him an undershirt, soap, banana and 3 cans.

I moved to the first floor's Room #3. Nine in the second floor's Room #1 moved with me. Wan was one of them. Soon 50 arrived. They were all reclassified.

Mr. Suh came to Room #2 on December 7. I met him in the yard. We exchanged information. He told me that most Vietnamese prisoners would be sent to labor camps and Koreans would be freed. Mr. Ahn and Mr. Choi Ki Sun would join us.

I was convinced that we all would be free. My judgment came from Captain Nahm's statement when I left the isolated cell in the D building and the special care shown to me in the AH building and Mr. Suh's earlier statement.

That night and the following morning I had supper and breakfast with Wan and former marine Thanh. They ate my food. I accepted Wan's suggestion to eat together for my good will gesture.

On December 8 around 2:00 in the afternoon, Wan approached me through his antenna Tam, and told me:

"I'll let you write a letter to Hoa (Lee Sune Hong's secretary) which indicates what you want--food, daily necessities, clothes, medicine... She will come tomorrow with what you want. Please write. The channel is from Ongha to Ongbong, and from him to Hoa."

Wan's suggestion was not official but unofficial. I was suspicious of that unofficial channel. He might use that letter for his credit to Dien. Who knew this fox?

I rejected his suggestion. I told him I didn't need anything. He couldn't understand why I rejected that opportunity.

Later, I told this story to Mr. Ahn. Ongha was quite surprised from this story when he heard from Mr. Ahn. I was wise. On December 11, Mr. Ahn and Mr. Choi Ki Sun were transferred to the first floor. We 4 Koreans enjoyed meeting together.

December 10: Two hundred prisoners each day moved to Ham Than labor camp. In a few days, only 120 remained out of 1920.

December 14: Wan asked me to give him my cashmere blanket or red blanket. I rejected his request. I could give these blankets to better guards or inmates when I had to leave this prison. He would be the last person I would give something to. Anyway, my freedom was not guaranteed.

December 15: Another transfer. All 4 Koreans were moved to the second floor's Room #2. Was was placed in Room #3.

Wan continued his request through Col. Hai.

Wan explained why I remained in this prison: If he reported about me honestly, I would be sent to the labor camp in Ham Than. He was threatening me to give up my blanket. I rejected his request, again.

December 18: Wan was moved to the E building with all other inmates in Room #3. He was out of Dien's control. There he lost all his power of senior prisoner and top antenna. He was deprived of all the privileges he used to enjoy. No one gave him anything. He was almost starved in 50 days.

The AH building 2nd floor 2nd room had many high ranking South Vietnamese officials: 1 Presidential candidate, 1 Prime Minister, 3 cabinet members, 1 Deputy Minister, 1 Wahan Church No. 2 man, and its Deputy Commander, 1 Congressman, 1 Police Commissioner, 2 custom heads, 1 provincial Governor, 2 prison Commanders, 1 Cambodia Air Force Colonel, 1 Chinese newspaper editor, 1 Vietnamese newspaper editor, 3 Korean diplomats, 1 Chinese-Hong Kong citizen, 1 Cambodian citizen, 1 Korean citizen and many others.

Former South Vietnamese Army Major Xuan was the room Captain who was later replaced by former South Vietnamese Police Lieutenant Duong, when the former was sent to political education.

Duong was a nice person. We could eat ramen near the toilet in the night and in the early morning. Four Koreans ate together. President Lee sent us enough food.

The guards in the daytime selected 20 volleyball players and let them play a game. Four Koreans played volleyball once a month. Mr. Suh was popular because his serves were all accurate.

In the night, we played Chinese Chess game. Mr. Suh was playing the chess game well. He was very popular. I cheered him up. Four Koreans hoped the day would come soon to be free.

There was one old antenna, a 67 year old man from the Mecong Delta Wumin Forest area who was a Vietcong-turned-to South Vietnamese. He was friendly to us. He didn't report anything negative.

I enjoyed discussions with other inmates; why South Vietnam fell.

The following table shows North And South Vietnam in a comparative perspective as of December 31, 1974.

	South Vietnam	North Vietnam
	2	2
Area	171,655 Km	158,750 Km
Population	19,700,000	23,790,000
Military manpower	1,246,622	1,114,300
Armed forces	578,748	472,200
Militia	523,376	Approximately 500,000
Others	Combat Police	South Vietnam
	144,498	Revolutionary Army
		142,100 (Vietcong)
Military Aid		
72-73	467 million	400 million
73-74	964 million	400 million
74-75	700 million	800 million(?)
Per capita income	\$ 182	\$ 60(?)

South Vietnam was superior in all categories except in population. About 1,200,000 North Vietnamese have come to South Vietnam since 1954. Approximately 200,000 South Vietnamese have moved to North Vietnam since 1954.

Why South Vietnam fell?

Ngo Khac Tinh told me the following story. He was a second cousin of President Thien, a classmate and playmate to Thien in their early childhood days, and later Thien's education and public information Minister.

He blamed Thien's personnel policy. He was good until 1970. Then, he trusted General Hoang Duc Nha and Dang Van Quang. General Nha abused presidential trust and became corrupted. Tinh was Nha's cousin. Thien's grandmother was a sister of Tinh's grandmother. Nha's mother was Tinh's aunt.

I asked him: Why didn't you stop him?

He answered: He didn't listen to me.

Gen. Quang was a well known corrupt case. I once advised Thien to dismiss him. He rejected it on two reasons: he was Thien's Army Cadets' School



classmate, and he did not withdraw his spy mission from North Vietnam because of budget constraints.

Thien was sentimental in his decision making. He lost popularity. The South lost to the North.

Phan Huy Quat, former Primer Minister, blamed politicians. Politicians did not see national interest. Their political interest prevailed over national interest. He proposed to Thien a super cabinet one month before South Vietnam's fall. He tried. But opposition politicians set the preconditions that Prime Minister Tran Thien Khiem and Gen. Quang should be dismissed. Opposition leaders attempted to make "good deals." Politicians, opposition politicians should be blamed, said Quat.

Near to my straw mat, former Col. Tran Van Hai, the Prison Commander under Thien, former court clerk, Tran Ngoc Hien, former Army Major Nguyen Ngoc Xuan, and the Tinh brothers. Next to them were former Minister Ho Van Cham, former Presidential candidate Nguyen Dinh Quat. They were good people to talk to.

Catholic Fathers Hoang Quinh and Tran Huu Thanh were famous in South Vietnam politics during the Diem time. Father Quinh led 800,000 North Vietnamese Catholics to South Vietnam and helped them settle. Father Thanh helped Diem organize his political party.

Diem was killed by the U.S.-backed coupdetat on November 2, 1963. The military government controlled the nation. Thien was elected as President on September 3, 1967.

Thien was more democratic than Diem. Thien did not ask for the two Fathers' help. Father Thanh organized the national movement for peace restoration and anti-corruption and staged a protest against Thien. Father Quinh supported Thanh's movement. Thien did not suppress them. Thien was a Catholic.

January 8, 1975: The North Vietnamese Politbureau made a decision to unify two Vietnams. North Vietnam's 18 divisions moved to the South. Its Army Chief of Staff Gen. Van Thien Duong crossed the 17th parallel on February 5, 1975.

North Vietnam's 3rd Army Corps attacked Ban Me Thuot, central highland, a strategic place for South Vietnam, with 5.5 times more than the south army. After 4 days battle, the North smashed the South's 23rd Army division. The division headquarters, airport and provincial capital fell to the North.

Father Thanh talked to a French reporter:

"There was no North Vietnamese soldier in Ban Me Thout. There were only citizens' movement against anti-democratic, anti-corrupt Thien government. There was just an uprising." His comment was printed in a newspaper. The reporter was killed by a South Vietnamese policeman. Thien's down could not stop North Vietnam's attack.

March 27, 1975: Nguyen Cao Key, former Vice-President, attempted a coup d'etat. He was arrested on April 4. Former Deputy Prime Minister Tran Van Tuyen, the National Party leader organized a demonstration in front of the National Assembly calling for Thien's stepping-down. Thich Tri Quang, a Buddhist monk, and all others above did not stop the North Vietnam invasion. They all insisted that Thien should resign. They did not help the nation's defense.

April 21, 1975: President Thien resigned.

April 30, 1975: South Vietnam fell.

Thien and Ky fled South Vietnam. Former Deputy Prime Minister Tran Van Tuyen was sent to a North Vietnam prison and then died there. Father Quinh died in a South Vietnam prison. Monk Quang was prisoned. His death was not yet confirmed.

When South Vietnam fell, all the people against Thien also fell. That was a tragedy.

Politicians should control their personal ambitions greedy desire, and jealousy. Anti-Communist politicians could not find unity. Their personal interest prevailed over the public or national interest. That is why the South fell.

Former Police Major Ohm next to Mr. Suh told another corrupt story.

The Department of Education was in charge of students' study abroad. He went to the department in order to send his daughter to the U.S. for her advanced study. The Minister's secretary was a middle aged beautiful woman. She told Ohm:

"Please pay me \$3,000 for that arrangement. Your daughter will receive \$6,000 in four years. You still make \$3,000." The Education Minister and the Police major were now in the same prison, AH building, 2nd floor 2nd room.

There was Quinn, a Chinese-Vietnamese in Room #1. His brother-in-law Chen was a rich man who ran the travel agency, Five Ocean in the Continental Palace at 171 Dato Street. One October day in 1974 customs' officials invaded his home and found \$200 and a loan statement to a foreigner. They confiscated \$200. The following day he received a Writ of Summons to the Customs Office. The Chinese went to the Customs Office and met the section chief.

He explainted to Chen: A 10-year jail sentence and deportation after that for the crime of possessing foreign currency and doing private business with foreigners.

He also explained to Chen: "I'm a close associate of Prime Minister Tran Thien Khiem. I can kill anyone who attempts to fire me." Chen was given a choice between the 10-year jail sentence or paying \$300,000 to him in 24 hours.

The next day, Chen gave him \$60,000, all of his money. He put \$60,000 in several toy rabbits. The section head told Chen: "Well it is over. We should live like brothers. Please come to me whenever you have problems. I'm a very close associate of Prime Minister Khiem. I'm the strong man in this office regardless of my rank. Let us see soon." Chen said "Thank you" to him and left the Customs Office.

Another inmate next to Mr. Suh was Nguyen Thu, a famous editor in chief of the Thiuruan newspaper. He told Mr. Suh about Prime Minister Khiem's wife. His wife liked diamonds and other expensive jewelries every day. The newspaper printed a story about her love of diamonds. Khiem was a Prime Minister from September 1, 1969 to April 4, 1975. His son-in-law was a brother of Thien's son-in-law.

South Vietnam had 58,000,000 soldiers before its fall. It was estimated that phantom soldiers and flower soldiers made up approximately 100,000. The newspapers estimate could be quite accurate.

Phantom soldiers were soldiers on paper. They stayed at their homes. Flower soldiers worked for the officer personal business. They were good looking "flowers." Their work had nothing to do with military duty.

Gen. Cao Van Vien, the Chief of Joint Forces from 1966 to the downfall of South Vietnam, was known as an honest general. However, his men were all corrupt. They messed up the South Vietnamese Army. All the inmates quoted many corruptions of bureaucrats and army officers.

Col. Hai was the Commander of this prison. He played tennis with Prime Minister Khiem. Khiem also played tennis with a prisoner named Truong Diah Dzu. Dzu was a lawyer who ran for the Presidential election on September 3, 1967. He promised to stop the bombing in North Vietnam and would start peace negotiations when he was elected as President.

The election results were:

<u>Presidential Candidates</u>	<u>Votes</u>
Nguyen Van Thien	1,649,561
Truong Dinh Dzu	817,120
Phan Khac Sun	513,374
Tran Van Hung	474,100
Ha Thuc Ky	349,473
Nguyen Dinh Quat	291,718
Nguyen Hoah Hiep	147,557
Vu Hong Khanh	135,919
Hong Co Binh	118,238
Phan Huy Co	97,512
Tran Van Ly	84,881

Dzu was not elected. But his campaign influenced President Johnson to stop the bombing in North Vietnam and finally the truce was signed on January 27, 1973 at the Paris Conference which was attended by the U.S., South Vietnam, North Vietnam and the Vietcong. The United States and allied forces' were out of Vietnam according to the truce.

President Thien arrested Dzu and sent him to the Con Son Prison after due process. He was guilty of acting as the North Vietnam agent. George McGovern, a U.S. Presidential candidate visited him in the prison and interviewed him. McGovern criticized Thien who sent Dzu to the so-called tiger cage and thus violated his civil rights.

Thien transferred Dzu to the Chiwha Prison's air-conditioned room with a refrigerator and allowed his wife to visit him from 7:00 in the morning until sunset. He could receive unlimited gifts from the outside, and could enjoy tennis.

My first meeting with Dzu was in 1963 when I was a military attache to the Korean Embassy in Saigon. I played golf several times with him. The last meeting was on April 28, 1975 at the Don Can Restaurant in Saigon. He had lunch with two Americans. He went to the United States, and then the FBI arrested him in 1977 on charges of spying for North Vietnam. The middleman between him and Hanoi was Dinh Ba Chi, the UN Ambassador. Dzu was guilty by the Court and prisoned, and Ambassador Chi was deported. Chi was later killed in an auto accident in Hanoi.

April 8, 1975 - 8:22AM: Lt. Nguyen Thanh Trung a pilot of F5E fighter planes of South Vietnam bombed the Independence Palace. He volunteered to bomb Nha Trang, but he flew to Saigon under an excuse of mechanical failure. He didn't return to the Bien Hoa Air Base. He turned to North Vietnam's Da Nang Air Base.

It made Thien look bad. People had high respect for the Air Force pilot. They thought pilots were the last ideal, sound Anti-Communists. That bombing at the palace signalled that the Air Force betrayed the Thien government. There was no hope. Thien nearly collapsed.

Lt. Triung was the North Vietnam's agent according to a newspaper report quoting Gen. Van Thien Dung, North Vietnam's Army Chief and Hanoi's newspaper. It was released after South Vietnam's fall. His father, a Communist party secretary at Mecong Delta was killed by the South Vietnam Army in 1963. His mother and sister were arrested. Trung joined the Vietcong. The Vietcong instructed him to work for an underground agent and do "something big."

May 1969: He was a sophomore engineering student at Saigon University. His school grades were all good. He was admitted to the Air Force Pilot School. He was selected to study in the U.S. After 2 years training, he returned to Saigon. He waited for his very chance, and he did it.

There might be many more Lt. Trungs in South Vietnam. Another example was Army Col. Pham Ngoc Thao. His father was a friend of Father Ngo Dinh Thuc. Because of that, Col. Thao received high trust from President Ngo Dinh Diem and

his brother Ngo Dinh Nhu. He fought against the French Army as a Vietminh Colonel. Then he turned to the South and became the Governor of Kien Hoa Province in 1959. His Anti-Communism reputation was impeccable.

November 1, 1963: He joined the Coup Army which overthrew the Ngo Dinh Diem regime.

January 30, 1964: Gen. Nguyen Khaun come to power after the second coup. Col. Thao became his Press Secretary.

September 13, 1964: Gens. Duong Van Duc and Lam Van Phat launched the third coup but failed in 2 days. Khaun controlled.

February 19, 1965: Col. Thao launched the fourth coup. He used Siest with Col. Huynh Van Ton, the 7th Division Commander, and Gen. Lam Van Phan who hid at Hoc Mon Village after the last coup failed. The 46th Infantry Regiment, the 49th Infantry Regiment, 5th Tank Battalion and one Marine company swiftly moved to Saigon and controlled the Saigon broadcasting, Vietnam Police, Capital Defense Headquarters and the Navy Headquarters. They arrested Gen. Tran Van Minh, Chief of Joint Forces, Gen. Pham Van Dong, capital Defense Commander, Gen. Linh Quang Vien, Minister of public information, and Gen. Naugen Duc Than, Strategy Director at 2:30PM.

5:00PM - I planned to visit Gen. Thien, Defense Minister at the Army Headquarters. Thien and I were classmates at Okinawa Joint Staff College in 1958. We were Second Lieutenants. Since I came to Vietnam as a military attache, we kept in close contact. He and his wife had good reputations. I had to discuss the situation with him because the Korean Army Mobile Operating Hospital was in Vung Tau and one construction battalion was ready to land on Vietnam. I was stopped at the main gate. There was a high-ranking officer who directed the gate keeper. He was Col. Thao. I knew him. I said "Hello, Col. Thao, I have something to talk about." He said, "Let's talk next time. I don't have time now." He kicked me out.

Gen. Du Quoc Dong's Airborne Brigade moved from Vinh Gia in the night and moved into Saigon before dawn on February 20th at 7:27AM. This brigade recaptured the Saigon Broadcasting, and recaptured the Army Headquarters at 12:35PM. Thao's coup failed in one day.

Gen. Lam Van Phat, Col. Thao and 16 other coup leaders fled. Col. Thao hid out in Ho Nai Catholic Village, 26 km northeast of Saigon. Catholic neighbors helped him to hide.

May 20, 1965: Six Catholic officers were arrested. Thao was not. South Vietnam offered \$30,000 reward for Col. Thao's arrest. Finally, his location was detected. He was shot to death. Many Catholic people regretted to lose the Anti-Communist Army Colonel. He was a close friend to Prime Minister Khiem.

A series of coupdetats, political warfares, factionalism forced the military morale down to the ground. In 1964, 463,063 manpower in the forces. There were 38,596 deserters from January 1 to December 31, 1964. Some reports estimated 150,000 deserters in 1964. Four coupdetats in one year and 4 months paralyzed soldiers' morale to counter Vietcong attack.

At the end of 1965, 10,922 villages were in South Vietnam. The government controlled 3,533 villages. Vietcong controlled 4,715 and 2,674 were mixed; during the day under the government and at night under the Vietcong. Col. Thao tried one more coup. Ten years after his death, South Vietnam was dead. He was later known as a North Vietnam spy.

1959: Binh Tre, Kien Hoa Province revolted against the South Vietnamese government. The Communists praised the revolt as the first people revolt, and made a movie out of that revolt. That revolt was made possible by Col. Thao, then Governor of the province. He acted very well as the most trusted man of the Ngo Dinh Diem government, and as the most talented agent of North Vietnam at the same time.

He often met Trung Nu Than, President of the National Sugar Corporation at his house. He was his school classmate. Than was one of the key Vietcong leaders. Col. Thao knew it. On June 6, 1969, he went to the Cambodia border and became Vietcong Minister of Justice.

Thao told the press after the liberation that Col. Thao was the giant spy equivalent to Soviet Spy George. A Catholic was not the only target for the Communist infiltration. Que Mong Thu, a woman Congressman, right-hand person of monk Quark, the main opposition leader, was similar to Col. Thao. She led demonstrations for freedom of religion, press and of college and for the downfall of the Thien government with Buddhists and college students. It was disclosed that the famous monks Thich Thien Hoa and Thich Tri Thu were the Communist agents.

The Saigon University Student Body President, Huin Tham Mahm was also the Communist agent. Vice-President Ky used him for his final attempt to power on October 1, 1971 at 7:30AM. His 200 men included Mahm, Congresswoman Thu, and other Buddhist Congressmen, Buddhist veterans, Saigon University students and Ky's own men.

The Communist agents infiltrated into every walk of life. There would be so many spy stories. The National Assembly, executive branches, the Independence Palace were all the spy targets. Thien arrested hiw own staff for their spying activities. The Vietcong knew all the activities in the South Vietnamese government and organizations.

Than, Vietcong's Minister of Justice, disclosed that his agents infiltrated in all government agencies after the liberation. The Vietcong knew everything well in the Thien government.

The split of Anti-Communist organizations, corruption and poverty of the intelligence activities, or exposure to the enemy caused the easy downfall of South Vietnam.

Some blamed the military failure in the last campaign. For example, failure of the 2nd Army Corps strategy of withdrawal and strategic error of moving the airborne division from Dha Nang to Saigon. These military failures were "trivial" to me. It is questionable whether South Vietnam could stop the North Vietnam offense even if the former did not commit such military strategic errors.

Some discussed the United States betrayal as a major factor of South Vietnam's fall.

President Nixon sent letters to President Thien on December 17, 1972 and on January 5, 1973 saying that the U.S. would support South Vietnam if or when North Vietnam violated the truce and launched a massive attack. Nixon just promised. When necessary, the U.S. gave up its alliance.

Parts of President Nixon's letters are:

(1) Letter dated December 17, 1972.

Dear President:

It is my intention to quickly react when North Vietnam starts to attack South Vietnam. That is the violation of the truce.---

I assure you that the U.S. will strongly and quickly react to Hanoi's action.---

Richard M. Nixon

(2) Letter dated January 5, 1973.

Dear President:

---The U.S. will provide economic and military aid to you even after the truce is signed, and will react quickly to the North Vietnam offense with the total forces.---

Richard M. Nixon

President Nixon sent the above two personal letters to President Thien. Dr. Kissinger and Gen. Haig personally delivered Nixon's message to President Thien that the U.S. would mobilize B52 bombers and naval forces against the North Vietnam offense.

The U.S. committed air and naval defense of South Vietnam. South Vietnam could counterattack with its ground forces.

March 10, 1975: North Vietnam's 18 divisions attacked South Vietnam. The U.S. did not fulfil these commitments.

March 26, 1975: U.S. Army Chief of Staff Gen. Wayand reviewed the war for a week and recommended to President Ford \$72,200,000 in emergency military aid for stopping the North Vietnamese on the Daral-Hwanrang line. The U.S. Congress on April 19th rejected this aid proposal. South Vietnam fell. President Thien stepped down from the Presidency on April 21st. He showed President Nixon's personal letters to the T.V. audience, and criticized the U.S.'s failure not to comply with the agreement.

The U.S. could not be totally responsible for the downfall of South Vietnam. They could stop the North Vietnamese attack without B52 bombings and U.S. naval support. They had enough manpower and equipment. The North Vietnam Army acquired \$60,000,000 worth of military equipment and supplies from the South when they crossed the 17th parallel. The South Vietnam Navy did not engage in any war activities. It brought all the fleets to Thailand. Many airplanes left South Vietnam before the fall.

Six nations in China 2,000 years before were destroying themselves. China did not destroy six nations. Truth had not changed in 2,000 years.

South Vietnam destroyed itself. North Vietnam or the U.S. could not be blamed for the downfall of South Vietnam. South Vietnam was better off economically; North Vietnam soldiers ate salted food; and South Vietnam soldiers ate canned meat once a week. The North Vietnamese soldiers wore sandals without socks; the South Vietnamese soldiers wore socks and boots. South Vietnamese women had several Aozar' dresses, but the North Vietnamese women did not have such dresses. Probably cabinet members' wives had one or two dresses. If South Vietnam bureaucrats were corrupt, then North Vietnam bureaucrats could be much more corrupt, because the latter received one-tenth of the former's pay.

If the South Vietnamese politicians were united against the Communists, and set priority of national interest over their personal ambitions, then South Vietnam could never be defeated.

The war was over. It was too late. If other nations did not learn lessons from the Vietnam story, then they might fall like South Vietnam. Then, they would regret again.

1978 was approaching us. On December 23, I provided a party with 50 Kg-gifts from President Lee Sune Hong. We boiled the water for ramen and ate boiled eggs and candies. We sang a song quietly.

On January 3, 1978, I sent a report to the Minister of Foreign Affairs in Seoul via secret network. On January 4, I sent a letter to my wife via secret network. Letters contained my happy news: I was freed from solitary confinement 2 months ago. Everyday I received outside gifts, enjoyed conversations with other inmates, and hoped to be freed. My weight was almost 70 Kg, gaining 10 Kg in 2 months and my waist 32 inches.



I didn't have a toothache. I was healthy and happy.

Soon pessimistic feelings surrounded me.

January 1, 1978: Everybody was allowed to meet visitors and relatives for the celebration of Lunar New Year's day. I was the only one who didn't have that privilege. I talked to Mr. Suh and Mr. Ahn:

"Please transmit this message to President Lee Sun Hong! When you get out of this visitation, you should go to the French Embassy and let it send a message to Korea. He may use my name or his name. The message is:

1. I'm healthy. I'm recovering well. Weight 70 Kg. Waist 32 inches.
2. I'm barred from any visitation. I'm humiliated by the North Vietnam authorities. I'm constantly watched. But I'll overcome all the difficulties.
3. On behalf of 3 Korean diplomats, I express my gratitude to the President and cabinet members, and Happy New Year to all of you.

I slowly repeated the message.

8:00AM: Mr. Suh and Mr. Ahn and other inmates went to the visitation place under the guard's direction. I was alone in the prison room, and I had to find reasons why I should be left alone. It was the same in 1977. Former Colonel Ho Van Kiet in my next cell, and Lim Seng Pin, a mallay Sian in the Chiwha Prison Hospital got the visitation opportunities last year.

Last September, special visitation was allowed for the celebration of the North Vietnamese holiday. Fathers Loc and Thanh in the next cells, and isolated inmates in D building were allowed to see their visitors. I and 5 young officers from Sahau waiting for execution were not allowed.

Why this time? Now, I was one of the regular inmates. They should not treat us like this.

Was my high rank the reason? No, it couldn't be. Because many high-ranking government officials, Prime Ministers and Presidents of Anti-Communist League, Hwan Hwi Quacto and Ngo Quac Thinh, Presidential candidate Nguen Dinh Quac, CIA Anti-Communist director Ho Van Kiet and police commissioners were allowed to see their visitors.

Why? Because I'm a foreigner...No, it should not be. Chinese newspaper editor-in-chief Yu Il Sung, Chinese Hong Kong citizen HHan Min, Mr. Suh, Mr. Ahn, Lim Seng Pin, Cambodian Col. Thaw Pann...all had privileges to see their visitors.

Why? They might be concerned of my possible secret releasing of letters criticizing new Vietnam's cruel treatment of diplomats to the U.N. Secretary or to the International Red Cross. But how did they know my plot? Anyway, they might watch me more carefully... Then, they could stop me from handing over that kind of letter. What else?

I remembered the statement issued in May 1977 by the D building supervisors' meeting that Thu Dai Yong was the worst reactionary Anti-Communist. They still pressured me to yield myself to the Communist ideology, and to release all the Korean national security information for North Korea's unification strategy. They might wait the time I surrender to their painful pressures. And I projected I might never see my visitors.

Mr. Ahn relayed orally my message to President Lee. Lee sent a telegram to the Korean foreign minister via Thai Korean Embassy. He also sent a letter to our families. The letter was:

Ho Chi Minh City: Jan. 23 (Monday), 1978.

Mrs. Ree, Mrs. Suh, Mrs. Ahn, how are you?

We are all O.K. The day before yesterday I received a telegram from Mrs. Lee and knew that my letters dated on November 15 and 20 had been well received. It took so long. I sent my letter to you on January 6 and 7 and Mr. Suh's letter and Mr. Ahn's letter to you on January 3 and 4 respectively. You will receive them soon.

January 20. I met Mr. Suh, Mr. Ahn and civilian Choi Ki Sun between 8:30 to 9:00 in the morning in free atmosphere. When I arrived, Mr. Suh, Mr. Ahn, and Mr. Choi were waiting for us. Mr. Rhee was not there. I regret not being able to see him. I'm sorry to Mrs. Rhee. My report from the visitation was sent to you via the French Embassy. You will receive it through the Korean Foreign Affairs Ministry.

Mr. Suh (8:30-9:00)

Place: Outdoor visitation Office (200 m. from the main gate).

Language in use: Korean (free atmosphere, Guard: Ong Bong).

Health: Weight 74 Kg. Waist line 34 inches. Suntanned face, good health. Cheerful. Looking good, eats well, and is sleeping well. Conversation with Rhee is good. Choi is kitchen helper, so we can eat hot meals, and have hot water. Don't worry about him. His stomach illness is gone.

Mr. Such talked to Hoa [Vietnam women at Rhee's home] and Mr. Lee Jung Oh. I talked to Mr. Ahn. Ahn looks good, too. Weight and color of skin good looking. Compared to our last meeting on August 23, he is much better and cheerful. Hope to be free soon.

Visitors: Lee Sune Hong; Lee Jun On, Finance Secretary; Chang Sung Hee, advisor to the President; Hoa, interpreter; Thomas [French citizen, 50, my employee for the last 6 years]. Mrs. Oh, Hoa's 2 brothers were not allowed to see them because they are Vietnamese. They were waiting at the main gate.

Gifts: 60 Kg (vegetables, fruits, dried fish, ham, boiled eggs, shrimp and ham, dried beans, hot peppers, cookies, onions, green onions, cabbage, pickled cucumbers, short pants, underwear, notebooks, ball pens...

Remarks: 60 Kg was heavy stuff. Mr. Choi carried it on his back upstairs. Ahn and Suh carried part of the stuff. When they took off their shirts, they proved their good health. Mr. Suh asked me to say to his wife he will be freed soon.

Mr. Ahn

Visiting hours (8:30-9:00)

Visitors: 5 (the same as above).

Place: the same as above.

Language in use: Korean.

Health: Looks good. Weight: the same as before. Suntanned face, eats well and is sleeping well. Rhee talked of many interesting stories. One finger was twisted, now O.K. Choi provides hot meals and hot water. Waistline: 34 inches.

Gifts: 60 Kg (the same as above).

Conversation: Mr. Ahn fought back tears when he relayed Rhee's message. Rhee asked me to send messages to the Korean government via the French Embassy. My name or his name is O.K.

1. I'm very healthy. Improving everyday. Weight 70; waist 34 inches.
2. Seeing President Rhee is not allowed. I'm humiliated by the North Vietnamese prison authorities. (Mr. Ahn fights back tears, all sad). I'm watched. I'll overcome all the difficulties.
3. On behalf of 3 diplomats, my thanks to our government, President and cabinet members. Happy New Year to the President and cabinet members!

Rhee Dai Yong  
at Chiwha Prison

Today I received a letter from Park Myung Kyn, uncle to Mr. Suh after 2 months and 6 days. I'll hand it to him. Thanks to Park. I cannot write further. I feel pain in writing. Good bye.

Lee Sune Hong

Jan. 26: Four Koreans and 2 Chinese moved to Room #3 from Room #2 on the second floor of the AH building. All inmates in Room #3 were moved to the E building. Six in the big room of 20 pyung made life easier. No toilet limitation was very good.

I taught Tae Kwon Do to Koreans and Chinese in the morning and in the evening. Room was good for Tae Kwon Do practices.

Yu Il Sung, editor-in-chief of a Chinese newspaper, 56, learned Tae Dwon Do. We improved our hands and arms. Less than a month, Vietnamese inmates filled Room #3. No more Tae Kwon Do. No more easy life, room became very crowded.

There was a Chinese-Vietnamese who lost one leg from a mine explosion in the combat field. This youth tore off Ho Chi Minh pictures on street walls. He was a political prisoner. Next to him was another youth who was lame. The two young men were so poor that they did not receive gifts more than once or twice. Their gifts were bananas, sugar, popcorn, pickled turnip roots, boiled eggs--all 5 Kg. They were beggars.

The lamed young man had so many scabs on his body from some kind of skin disease. He took off the scabs on his straw mat. So many flies were flying from his mat to my face and mat. It was miserable.

March 6, 1978: Koreans and Chinese moved to the AH Building in Room #2 to join former Prime Minister Quat and other old roommates.

March 15, 2:00PM: Four Koreans were asked to dress up and were led to a small room next to the AH Building Office. The "Cheekbone" and his men were waiting for me. I almost forgot him. After the second interrogation 2 years and months before, I did not see him. Suddenly he was there.

I unconsciously looked at his left wrist. I remembered his watch was a Rolex brand. His present watch was cheap stuff. I was ready to fight against the Cheekbone. Two Koreans sat on my sides.

He asked me about my health condition. He did not try to interrogate me. He just wanted to check a few things with me. His English was poor, but tried to speak in English even though he had an interpreter beside him. The interpreter knew Korean and Vietnamese.

I told him I lost my weight. He asked me whether I was still doing exercises every morning. I was curious: How did he know my morning exercise? He watched me in July 1975. I was exercising on the roof top of my apartment. I told him I did exercise. His next question was: "Were you tortured?" My answer was: "No."

Then he asked me: "Can you read Vietnamese newspaper?" I told him: "No, but my English is O.K. French is just beginning level."

He asked me my age, and guessed 60. I looked old, but not 60. He knew my age when he confiscated my passport on October 3, 1975. I wondered why he asked my age. He certainly knew my age. It might be a passing question. Our conversation was over.

He asked the same questions to other Koreans, and emphasized whether they could read French and English publications. He talked to the third Korean in Vietnamese for about 30 to 40 minutes. I could not understand their conversation.

The Cheekbone told us: "If you understand Vietnam, you will be freed."

After the meeting, I asked the third person about their conversation in Vietnamese. He explained: "The Cheekbone asked me my health condition and whether I intend to harm new Vietnam when I return to Korea." I answered: "No, I'll send a thank-you telegram to you from Bangkok."

The Cheekbone asked me the last question: "How do you view the Vietnam-Cambodia conflict." He answered: "I know everything in the newspapers." I sighed and was dissatisfied with his answers, but I felt some hope of freedom from the meeting with him.

March 20: Six more prisoners came to the already overcrowded room. One person's space was 55 cm. Inmates had an idea to create another space near the entrance. The space might be good during nap and sleeping hours. The door to the hallway was always open except during sleeping hours. After the evening roll call, the door was closed until the morning roll call. The door place was the busiest place; food, water, and all necessary communications came through the door.

Inmates could lie down on the mats during free hours, and play chess and domino games. No one wanted his "sweet home" near the entrance. Sleeping place in the night only could not make perfect location. But there was no choice.

In the prison, seniority was a powerful thing. New comers did not have the choice.

Former Army Major Xuan protested the assigned place. He did not accept the assignment because this place did not exist in the day time. That was his discontent. Dirty and "busy street" of the place could not please any one.

His protest was understandable. So all the inmates were quiet. He was a former Education Minister, Thinh's protege. Thinh was my 10-year long friend. I gave red and white ginsengs to him before the downfall.

I volunteered to go to that place because my mat was supported by vinyl. I sacrificed myself to accept the spot.

After 2 hours, Major Xuan made another protest; this time he complained about my space. He was critical of my "one meter" space, and his and the others 55 cm space. He proposed rearrangement of all the spaces. He measured my place and shouted.

If everyone got the same space, they might get 3 1/2 cm more space. The former Education Minister and his brother instigated this conflict for more space. Most inmates were supportive of his proposal. I told him that I would return to my old place and he should take this place. He rejected my proposal. Col. Hai, my classmate at the U.S. Army Staff College supported me. Xuan was quiet.

After 30 minutes of peace, he resumed his protest. Former Cambodian Air Force Col. Than Pan quieted him. He was the son-in-law of Cambodian Prime Minister Son Nok Than. Col. Than Pan had a sense of justice and "killing" eyes to Major Xuan. Then, no one was supporting Xuan's complaint.

I looked at them with pity. I did not see any hope from these Vietnamese. They were betrayers. It was a sad experience.

March 28: Lt. Nguyen Van Trac came to the AH building 2nd floor Room #2. He was the Education Officer of this prison. He was from North Vietnam and was a Vietnam Communist Party member who had the power to punish, educate, transfer, and interrogate in this prison. His rank did not mean very much. He was above all the Captains and higher ranks.

The Prison Commander was Dao Lung from Binh Dinh. But Trac was a more powerful person than Dao Lung. He tortured Vietnamese inmates, prohibited outside gifts to some inmates and placed some inmates into isolated cells. No one liked him in the prison.

He said to us that Room #2 was crowded because so many gift packages were placed in disorder. He asked that the room be kept cleaned and orderly. Then, former Major Xuan told him that most of the packages were Koreans'. Then Trac ordered no April gifts to all Koreans.

Trac changed Room Captains on March 30. Phong, a former driver to the South Vietnam Airborne Division Commander became the Captain when he was transferred from Room #1. He was one of the main antennas. He was a loyal dog to the prison authorities. Under his "leadership", the room atmosphere turned to the ice age. No secret cooking was allowed. Ramen [Korean noodle] was only edible with lukewarm water. It was soap-smelled.

My secret communication to the outside was not made possible. I reported once a month to the Korean government since January, but under the circumstances, I could not. I could contact President Lee once a week, though. So many antennas were watching us.

April 12, 1978: All inmates in Room #2 were transferred to the E Building, second floor's Room #7, and then to the E Building second floor's Room #5. We, the Koreans were asked to find the best places in Room #5 before others arrived. We were looking for the best places and Col. Hai helped us find them. Then, the Vietnamese, Chinese and Cambodians flooded in. Former Senator and Minister Thinh shouted to Col. Hai. He criticized Hai's helping. He said that the Vietnamese were loyal to the French colonists, and was critical of Hai's act as an extension of such loyal acts to foreigners. Former Lt. Col. Be did support Thinh. He shouted, "We are Vietnamese." He shouted in French, not in Vietnamese. It was funny. Col. Hai stopped his help.

April 29: The officer in charge of the E Building second floor was changed. The Police Captain from Binh Duong, north of Saigon, was an illiterate but a talkative Communist. He was in charge of only night duties before. His nickname was thus "the night guard."

May 10, 1978: The Room Captain reported to the new officer, night guard, about 6 buckets the Koreans received from President Lee. The Koreans were all carrying water every morning. We filled the 2 empty drums and also filled 6 private buckets for our dishwashing and showers. The Room Captain did not like our special showering every night. The Koreans were given special showering every morning. But the officer who allowed the special showers was long gone. The night guard did not want to continue the old officer's "policy."

May 13: The night guard came to Room #5 and made a long speech. His speech was:

"Vietnam Socialist Republic is the third most powerful nation on the Earth. We won the wars over Japan and USA. We are next to the USSR and China. Ho Chi Minh, Secretary Le Quan, President Ton Duc Thang, Prime Minister Pham Van Dong, Chairman Truong Chin, Defense Minister Vo Nguyen Giap are all great. This new socialist country does not accept the concept of private property. So all the buckets in the room belong to all. No more private use of the buckets. A few inmates enjoy morning shower. That was wrong. There should be no special privileges to a few." He repeated the same message for over 40 minutes.

Special shower privileges were given to me because I was unlawfully confined to the dark warehouse in November 1977. Now, everything was gone. Our private properties turned out to be public goods. Koreans could not endure the tropical temperatures like the Vietnamese.

Mr. Ahn made another idea. The Kimchi [pickled cabbage] in plastic jars could be used for wet towels in the night. But the Vietnamese did not even like that. They made holes. The Chinese and Cambodian inmates were sympathetic to us, but the Vietnamese were not, even my close friends.

We missed the outside gifts in April. But we received them in May, but we shared food with Thinh brothers, Major Xuan, and other poor Vietnamese inmates.

The night guard asked all inmates to review and reform of human mind for new nation building. I protested it because I was a diplomat. Col. Hai interpreted for me. Koreans were exempted from this "reform" session.

Reform and review sessions lasted long. Every report was written and submitted to the night guard.

May 20: Phan Huy Quat, former Prime Minister and Chairman of the Anti-Communist League, made his self-evaluation. His presentation of his reform shocked me. The 71-year old man kept Anti-Communist stance, but finally gave up his old stance. He praised Communism and even suggested more red books to the prisoners. He completely changed his belief and thus disappointed me. Was 3 years in prison long enough to change one's political beliefs? How long would he live? He had been a most respectable Anti-Communist leader. It was sad.

April 30: Both China and Vietnam indicated the possibility of war. May was closer to possible war. Mr. Suh and I asked inmates which side they would stand. All stood for Vietnam except Thanh, former tax administrator. Editor-in-chief Nguyen Thu was enthusiastic in his support of Vietnam. He would fight for Vietnam. He told me that China was the enemy country over thousands of years and Vietnam should fight over any foreigners. He did not find any reason to be friendly to China, even though two nations were Communists.

I told them, "If China overthrows the Hanoi government, you all go out to establish a free nation in South Vietnam with the U.S. and allied nations." They did not understand my position. Col. Hai said to me, "If there is a chance to reestablish South Vietnam, I will support your idea."

Uncertain news prevailed. July 3, 1978. The Director of Education came to our room and asked all foreigners to dress up and appear in the library. The library was previously Room #7 on the second floor of the E building. Four Koreans, 1 Chinese, 1 Hong Kong resident, and 2 Cambodians attended the library meeting. Eight foreigners and 3 Vietnamese inmates listened to the Education Director's speech.

"International situations are favorable to your early release. You are going to write your statement according to the direction in the government form. Your statement will help your early release. You should write in Vietnamese for me. Trinh was designated as the recorder and Thanh was the interpreter. You should write in detail and be precise. You should write in this library. Again, your freedom is dependent upon your statement."

After the speech, he turned his round face and showed a strange smile. His teeth were all straight. It looked cruel to me.

I was left alone. All foreigners returned to their room. I was with the interpreter and the recorder in the library. Trinh had forms, pads and a ball point pen on the other side of the desk. Thanh was in between Trinh and me. Three Vietnamese inmates remained in the library to write their statements. They sat 5 meters away from me.



Trinh was a political prisoner in the E Building second floor's Room #6. He was a North Vietnamese spy in Saigon under Thien leadership, then had a change in heart and worked for the South Vietnamese. After the downfall of South Vietnam, he was arrested and sent to this prison. Then he became again a loyal agent for the prison authority. He was a good antenna. Inmates nicknamed him "snake." He did not like his nickname and reported all activities to the prison authority.

Thanh was speaking English fluently in his forties. He was Principal of an English learning school before he finished junior high school in Hanoi during the French rule. He was a friend of Chon Young Sang. He talked a lot, but was a sincere and hard working man. He had good feelings toward Koreans.

I asked Thanh to show the forms which had 37 questions. All Vietnamese inmates filled out the forms several times. Some Koreans also filled out the forms in details. Some were under North Koreans' pressure.

I heard about the detailed forms. The form asked the respondents to record all their activities since birth. It was designed to praise Communism and evaluate the respondent's "reform."

Thanh explained the 37 questions in English. Trinh started asking each question. I interrupted him there and made my points.

"First, I'm a diplomat. Protection of diplomats was made in 1961 by the Vienna Agreement. All U.N. member and non-member nations signed on the Agreement. The North Vietnam Foreign Minister Trinh signed on the Agreement. I still hold my privileged diplomatic right from any interrogations.

Second, therefore, I cannot answer to 37 questions. I had had some experience on October 10, 1975. Capt. Lien, investigation Section Chief of the Immigration Office attempted to investigate my background. I did not respond to it. I do not now.

Third, I can fill out the form on administrative matters--name, date of birth, occupation, family and so forth. When I die, this information should be useful, so I can answer those administrative questions.

Recorder Trinh was not happy to my statements, and quoted the Education Director's words--"Your freedom is dependent upon this."

I copied my statements made in May 1975 in order to make an identification card from the Communist Vietnam government. It was voluntary reporting, not interrogation. I could falsify my report then.

Trinh was near-sighted. His eyes should be closer to the desk, about 5 cm to the paper with his own glasses. He tried to make perfect writing so that it took a longer time.

Hometown, address, name, occupation, blood type, religion, date of birth, took early morning hours. It was breakfast time.

1:15PM: After siesta, I returned to the library with Trinh and Thanh. A few more administrative questions were following "serious" questions-- educational background and occupational background.

I copied the same information I used in May 1975 as I mentioned above. It was false. I wrote then and now; I finished elementary, junior and senior high school and college in Seoul, and then taught economics and history at a high school. It was on April 1, 1948. I jumped the next 25 years and told Thanh the Minister of Economics at the Korean Embassy in Saigon on April 6, 1973.

He looked at me and was mad at my "jump". His dark face and bold head were not making him nice. He wanted me to fill in the 25 years from April 1948 to April 1973.

I "attacked" him.

"Writing is your job. I don't need to listen to you. Are you an interrogator? I only answered the administrative questions. I only repeat what I put in in May 1975. I don't want to continue this business."

He was hesitant and said, "I did not intend to investigate your background. I follow the questions and the Education Director wanted truthful answers as you heard."

He still tried to use the Education Chief.

"I'm a diplomat. I don't accept yours on his threat. I'm not afraid of anything like this. Forget it!"

Thanh interrupted our "conversation."

"I see. You taught 25 years there and became a diplomat. Why don't we have a 10-minute break?"

He suggested a break to the recorder.

After the break, the recorder was softer and smiled.

"I also taught at a high school in North Vietnam. You taught history. Did it include Chinese history?"

I answered, "I know Chinese history well. Chinese history has shown many men of integrity and honesty. I like Kwanwoonjang who chose death over surrender. Do you like him, too?"

"Yes, I like. One general killed him at Yangtze River. He left a famous poem.?"

He was talking about Hangwood, not Kwanwoonjang.

"You are talking about Hangwoo, not Kwansoonjang."

He smiled, "You certainly know more than I do."

He continued questioning.

Thirty-seven questions included everything: did you receive a medal from the North Korean government, or from the South Korean government, name of your parents and dates of their death, cause of their death, and so forth.

I answered, "None", or "I cannot answer that kind of question." I answered falsely to some administrative questions.

"It is not an administrative question. I don't need to answer.

The recorder insisted I should answer.

"Who are your? Don't force me to answer!"

I was firm. Then the interpreter came to us and brought peace.

Well, I completed answering, but not really, all falsified.

There was one question to name my friends. I named Ambassador Park Dong Jin to the U.N. post when the South Vietnamese fell on April 30, 1975. I knew that Park was the Minister of Foreign Affairs, but I pretended not to know present status.

The Vietnam Socialist Republic was concerned on the U.N. so that I used the U.N. as frequently as possible. I never met Park. I did not know him.

The last question was my request to the new Vietnam government. That was a good question that I liked to answer. I used diplomatic words which really criticized Vietnam's violation of international law and practice.

"I sincerely ask the Vietnam Socialist Republic to observe the Vienna Agreement sponsored by the U.N. in 1961 and then signed by North Vietnam."

I had to confirm all the statement were true, not false. I had to sign. If evidence to disprove my statements, I should accept any punishments. I reject it. I again claimed that Vietnam's domestic law should not be applied to the diplomat. I claimed only the U.N. rules should be applied. I was firm. Rather I chose death than signing on that paper.

We could not make progress. Lunch hour. We had to continue the next day.

I returned to my prison room and ate with 3 Koreans. I revealed my fierce fight against signing on the paper. I also talked to Col. Hai, former Court Clerk Tran Ngoc Hien and Phong, the Room Captain.

Next morning: The Education Officer and the recorder talked for a few minutes. I went to the library and sat down with the recorder.

Thanh interpreted the recorder's words. "Once you complete this paper work, the education officer will see you."

This was another threat.

"It's O.K. I'm not going to be threatened. One hundred, one thousand education officers cannot move my heart." We discussed the possible ending of the dispute. And I proposed the following acceptable change.

"All of the above statements are true. Once it is proven that these statements are false, I shall be punished by international law and international organization."

I signed.

I made it clear that the Vietnam Socialist Republic should not regulate my life. I did not believe the U.N. or other international organizations should be concerned on those kind of questions and statements. It was not worthwhile to investigate my fabricated statements by international organizations.

I could not trust the recorder. So I proposed to write it in English and negotiated to write in both English and Vietnamese. I returned to my room and talked to my Korean friends about the signing of the paper. I only answered the administrative matters and the answers except for my name and date of birth were all falsified. I told them I won because I changed the last statement to "international law" from the Vietnam law.

I was followed by Mr. Suh, Mr. Ahn, Mr. Choi Ki Sun, the Chinese and Cambodians.

I was ready to confront the education director, but nothing happened.

The recorder reported to my Room Captain Phong about my resistance and the "worst type" of personality. The report was leaking to all Koreans and to me. Phong told Col. Hai, and Hai told the Koreans about that.

July 12, 1978: Lien told the Koreans to pack our stuff. We were excited. We hoped freedom. Col. Hai, Clerk Hien, Phong, and the Chinese editor-in-chief helped us pack.

Col. Hai was the kindest to me. I met him on November 2, 1977 at the AH building second floor. We said "Hello" during our walking hours. I had a long talk at the volleyball court two weeks from the first meeting. I knew he was this Prison Commander under the Thien administration, and a graduate of the U.S. Army Staff College. He signed when I told him of my 25 months of solitary confinement in Buildings A, B and D. It should not happen. In a free, democratic nation, no more than 29 days were allowed to solitary confinement. More than one month would send any normal man to a mental hospital. President Thien himself did not allow that kind of long solitary confinement. He told me that the rule was very strict.

He was a good friend to the 4 Koreans. He helped us at least mentally.

I had to depart from him. I gave him vitamin tablets, soap, undershirts, underwear, bucket, ramen, sugar, pad, medicine and a ball point pen. Phong was good to me so I gave him vitamin tablets and soap. I gave medicines to Clerk Hien and other friends. Lt. Hieu known as "orphan" picked up a few things. He was known also as a thief, but he knew how to deal with other people. Some asked me to give them something, so I did.

Col. Hai was economically bankrupt, so he did not expect anything from his family. His property was a couple of English books, English for Today. He gave the books as a gift to me, but I could not accept them. He gave them to Mr. Suh. Mr. Suh could not accept them.

Lien asked me to follow him. We held our bags in our hands. Col. Hai looked at us without showing his emotions. I quickly realized this was not freedom but another "room", Room #5 on the third floor of the BC building. The 20-pyung room was big to 3 Korean diplomats. We placed our straw mats. The "Cheekbone", his aide, the Prison Commander and the BC building officer appeared and told us:

"First, are you healthy?"

"Second, this room is like your big hotel. You will enjoy it."

"Third, do you receive enough presents from outside?"

Mr. Ahn answered his question in Vietnamese. The Cheekbone group inspected the room and left it in 15 minutes.

The guard brought three new straw mats for us. The Cheekbone and the Prison Commander expressed their concern to us. Soon the Police Lieutenant came to us and announced special privileges authorized.

1. Every morning, we can have a shower after carrying water to the room.
2. All physical labor is exempted. You should continue only carrying water to the room. Diswashing job is transferred to the Vietnamese inmates.
3. Door is open from morning roll call to 5:00PM except during siesta. You are free to do exercises in the hallway, sunbathing, walking...
4. A half-bucketful of hot drinking water will be supplied in the morning and evening.

It was surprising. Very surprising.

We met a male nurse who was a prisoner next door. He was the North Vietnamese Army Master Sergeant. He was dispatched to Thailand to help the Thai Communist guerrillas. In the last war, he joined the forces who invaded Saigon as a Master Sergeant. Then, he deserted the unit in order to live in Saigon, not to return to Hanoi in June 1975. He was arrested and sent to this prison.

On June 12th in the afternoon, he told us:

"The Cheekbone will investigate 3 Koreans diplomats on July 15. When the investigation is over, 2 Korean civilians will join you from the Long Can Prison. Then, all 5 will be freed."

He told us the source of the information was the North Vietnamese officer in the Education Department.

Could it be true? Freedom was not far from us. We saw the difference from the Cheekbone's acts on March 15 and July 12. It was also understandable that 2 Korean civilians in the Long Can Prison would join us.

July 15, 8:00AM: The Cheekbone came with 2 officers who spoke English. They led us to the dispensary and separated me from Mr. Suh and Mr. Ahn. He and I sat on two sides of the desk.

He told me that the new Vietnam would like to maintain friendly relations with all other nations and showed the most humanitarian approaches to us. He gave us 10 white papers and a ball point pen to answer the questions. Then, he indicated the freedom we waited for so long.

Questions were: Date of report, name, date of birth, occupation, nationality, place of birth, Korean address, Vietnam address, religion, family, educational background, occupational background, witness of Vietnam's humanitarian policy, recommendation to new Vietnam government., He reiterated that my answers should be detailed and emphasized that my answer should state that I had not been tortured or hit.

I contested him as I had done on October 10, 1975 against the Cheekbone's interrogation and on July 3 of last year against Trinh, the recorder.

As I described above, on May 12, 1975, I filled out a form issued by the Vietnam Socialist Republic in order to receive an identification card and new diplomat card. The form had: Place of birth, address, name, date of birth, nationality, occupation, religion, family, education and job experiences. It was reporting items, not interrogating ones.

When confronting the enemy nation and unfriendly nations, I should consider national interest over personal interest. I tried to take care of my nation's interest first. I filled out the form--name, date of birth, nationality, occupation, Saigon address, entry date and place of Vietnam. Other questions were answered, most answers were not just true. I didn't care.

The Cheekbone looked at me, and reiterated the same words, "I'm a diplomat. I need international law, not your law. But I filled out this form, in the case of my death...."

I started to fill out the form: Date of presenting was July 15, 1978. Place of birth, ....

The Cheekbone stared at the paper.

He stopped me when I "jumped" 25 years from April 1, 1948 to April 6, 1973 Minister of Economics at the Korean Embassy in Saigon. He was waiting for that "jump."

"You should write each year of 25 years. You cannot do that way."

I answered, "I cannot. I don't feel to write."

They were angry. I pushed the pad and pen to his side. "I cannot answer anything, even administrative questions. Kill me!"

I was firm and fierce. They seemed to understand my determination. They did not force me further.

I pulled the pad and pen to me, and resumed writing answers to the next questions. They pressured me to write a detailed description of 25 years. I ignored them. I continued writing on the Vietnam Social Republic's humanitarian policy.

I knew what they wanted:

"After the war, I expected Saigon to be a bloody city. I was wrong. Saigon is peace. New government's humanitarian policy brought peace at last to this city. And I'm alive. I did not expect I should be alive. I was sympathetic to the Thien government. The Vietnam Socialist Republic is generous,....I just express my gratitude to the new government."

I could not write that kind of confession.

I had to write what I had experienced. I was not tortured or hit. So I wrote:

"I have not been tortured or hit by anyone since I was prisoned at Chihwa Prison since October 3, 1975 to July 15, 1978. I added a few more episodes: A few privileges, some touching care,....

I tried to show the Korean's care of "good" treatments by the prison authorities. I wrote:

1. December 20, 1976 - January 8, 1976. The officer on the third floor of the A building allowed 30 minutes' exercise in the hallway and shower, and 3 sunbathing opportunities.
2. March 16, 1977 - April 10, 1977. The same as above. 5 sunbathings.
3. July 10, 1977 - November 2, 1977. The officer of second floor of the D building provided 1 bucketful of hot water for morning and afternoon showers.
4. July 27-28, 1977. The officers of the second floor of the D building took care of me with 2 male nurses when I was in critical condition from influenza.

5. November 14, 1977 - April 12, 1978. The officers of the AH building allowed me to have everyday shower. Two other Korean diplomats were given the same "shower" privilege since mid-March 1978 (I cannot recall exact date). I would like to express my gratitude toward the officers of this prison. I truly owe my thanks to them.

I would really like to express my gratitude toward a few good officers. There were always some good people in any world. Not all were devils. Captains Ku and Nahm were the "good guys" to us and to all other inmates.

They stared at my writing. Their anger somewhat disappeared. They told me:

"Continue your writing. Recall all the episodes. I'll see other people. When you finish, you should not leave this place."

They left for the next room where Mr. Ahn and Mr. Suh were in.

I guessed the following:

"They want to separate me from Mr. Ahn and Mr. Suh. They are happy when I write something good about their prison. However, what I wrote are individual episodes not the prison policy on humanitarian action. I did not praise the Communist Vietnam. They did not torture me, but they placed me in solitary confinement for over 25 months. I did not see the sky for over 297 days. Could it be painful torture? They were not humanitarian at all. Crowded prison. There were just a few good human beings like Captain Ku and Nahm. I just wish they could be promoted from my statement."

I moved to the final question, recommendation of Vietnam Socialist Republic. I repeated the same idea I expressed on July 4 to the recorder.

"I sincerely request that the Vietnam Socialist Republic should observe the Vienna Agreement the U.N. sponsored and the then North Vietnam participated in, and release 3 Korean diplomats from this prison."

I signed.

The Cheekbone returned to the dispensary and made a short speech through the interpreter.

First, Vietnam Socialist Republic maintains friendly relationships with all nations.

Second, Vietnam Socialist Republic does not maintain diplomatic relations with South Korea, but with North Korea. However, we equally treat two Koreas.

Third, Vietnam Socialist Republic makes dramatic economic progress since the liberation. You will see it with your own eyes.



Fourth, if you miss something to write, then please send your additional statement to me through the Education Department.

He shook hands with me and gave me a pack of cigarettes, "Ban Co" to me. He left the room like he ran away. He was different and kind to me.

I returned to my room and met Mr. Suh and Mr. Ahn. We felt the release was near.

July 17: I added three more episodes and sent them to the Cheekbone through the Education Department.

We three diplomats were anxious to see 2 Korean civilians arrival from Long Can Prison, because we would be released with them. That was a hint.

On April 15, I sent a message via secret network to President Park Chung Hee [South Korea] on the changing situation in the prison and that Vietnam Socialist Republic's foreign policy toward South Korea was in transition.

September 1, 1978: A Communist party leader secretly took pictures of 3 Korean diplomats in the prison and the pictures were sent to the Korean government and families. President Lee was behind the scene.

September 9: I sent a long letter to my wife via secret network.

September 10: President Lee sent me a message that Mr. Yu, an old man was searching for my picture that was taken during my military attache career in Saigon. He sent the same message on September 4, but it was then too brief to understand. I was scared of this new development.

Ten years ago I had a picture taken with Col. Na Yong Soo, retired and his Vietnamese wife, Akiko at the Korean Embassy garden. Akiko had that picture. Mr. Yu wanted that picture. Mr. Yu was the man who promised to work for the North Korean agent. Their contact place was Majestic Hotel's Suite 502. I didn't know him since then. Anyway, I was scared. The picture might prove the fact that I was the military attache to the Korean Embassy in Saigon ten years before. I felt a dark future in front of me.

September 12: Police Lt. Wen Van Trak of the Education Department appeared in our hallway. There were many inmates who were tortured by Lt. Wen. I heard he tortured Mr. Lee Sang Kwan, a Korean civilian in the D building. Mr. Ahn told me of Lee's crying and begging for mercy under torture. Mr. Ahn was then prisoned next to Lee's cell.

There was the officer's desk and chain in the hallway. Wen watched the prisoners and talked to several Vietnamese prisoners in the next room. He called me. I went to his desk.

"Can I have a chat with you?"

"Fine!"

"Won't you mind going to North Korea?"

"No!" I was firm and hardened.

"North Korea is your country."

"I have a different political belief, and family in South Korea."

Mr. Ahn interpreted our conversation. I returned to my place.

"Isn't it strange? Why did that fat guy ask me that kind of question?"

Mr. Ahn quoted Lt. Wen's words, "it is just talk,"

"No, the Communists don't have "just words."

I saw two possibilities:

1. He tried to test my will power, and to detect my soft spot.
2. The Vietnamese attempted to send me to North Korea, not to South Korea. They might force me to go to North Korea.

It was too premature to judge anything from the brief talk. However, I felt the release sooner or later. The Cheekbone's changing attitude shown on March 15 and on July 15 assured me that I was still waiting for 2 Korean prisoners coming from Long Can Prison. They did not arrive. The newcomers were Vietnamese.

The ID building for female prisoners stood 70 meters away from our building. Fourteen women were prisoned there. President Thien's sister-in-law was one of them. They were curious of Korean diplomats in their prison. They asked our names and about our families. They used English, body language--hand language and a wall as a chalkboard for communicating with us.

The water tank we used was 25 meters away from their building. When we carried water and took a shower, they sent smiles and greetings from the second floor. One woman's name was Tien, between 28 and 32 years old and a beauty. She distributed Anti-Communist leaflets in Saigon. Her beauty, snow-white skin, her Korean, "How are you?" would long be remembered. She called me "father," and Mr. Ahn "brother."

The prison rule prohibited talking to the prisoners in other rooms. I let her know the rule that she could be sent to the isolated confinement cell because of the violation of the prison rule. She told me in Korean, "don't worry!"

She was sent to the dark solitary cell for 15 days because her letters to me and Mr. Suh were found in her pillow and underwear.

September 25, 1978: This was our 24th wedding anniversary. I sat on the straw mat after carrying water duty and missed my family. The Chief Officer and his staff of the BC building came to me and asked me to dress up. That meant long pants and a short-sleeved shirt. I usually wore short pants and an undershirt even though all the other prisoners wore only underwear. Former Prime Minister was the same. I was the most dressed man in the prison.

I dressed myself with long black pants and a yellow short-sleeved shirt with blue lines. My shoes were plastic sandals. I put a ball pen into my pocket. I walked out with the prison officers.

A white colored sedan was there. A driver and Police Lt. Hin Van Ryong, the Cheekbone's aide, were in the sedan. I didn't ask where we were going to. I just guessed the Foreign Affairs Ministry or Immigration Office before my departure for Korea, and thought it would be a diplomatic gesture for Vietnam.

Our car was passing downtown Saigon. Three years changed the city completely. Citizens lost their vitality, were ill nutritioned and were badly clothed. All the taxi cabs had disappeared. Trees were growing on one house's roof.

We got out of the car in front of a two-story house at 189 Congli Street in Saigon. The house was used for Indonesian consulate general's office in the Thien administration. A young Aozaid woman was working as a receptionist. I was curious whose office I was visiting. He could be a high-ranking official.

I was led upstairs by the Lieutenant. I saw 2 men who were sitting in chairs from across a desk. At first glance, they were not Vietnamese. One looked like Mr. Kim Il Song dressed up in a blue shirt and a dark grey suit. Lieutenant Hin showed me a small chair and left the room. The chair was placed about 3 1/2 meters away from the Kim Il Song looking man. I realized they were North Korean agents. They stared at me over their glasses and did not open their mouths.

The North Korean agents harassed Koreans who remained in Saigon after the downfall of South Vietnam. They started the operation in June 1975 and contacted several Koreans by July 19. On September 22, they interrogated Mr. Suh, consul at the Chiwha Prison. On September 23, Mr. Ahn, consul, Mr. Kim Jong Oak and Lee Sang Kwan were interrogated. Between September 27 and October 3, Mr. Yu, Mr. Min and Mr. Bang were interrogated in the Majest Hotel Suites 502 and 502. I was arrested on October 3. There could be more interrogations, I did not know.

They threatened Koreans and Korean diplomats. Many Koreans were weak under their threat. When threat did not work, they used conciliatory approach.

The Kim Il Song looking person seemed to be the senior agent. He opened his mouth.

"I came from North Korea."

His accent indicated that he was from Hwanhae Province.

I heard "North Korea" as "Ministry of Defense."

"Which Ministry of Defense?"

"I came from North Korea, northern half of Korea."

I still heard "North Korea" as "Ministry of Defense."

"I came from Pyungyang."

He raised his voice.

"Would you tell me your name and your job? I'm a diplomat who is protected by the international laws."

The senior person was quiet.

"Didn't you know we came from Pyoungyang?"

He was threatening me.

"You may well know Japanese and Nazi war criminals after World War II were executed. Your life is in our hand. Veitnam Republic authorized to decide your fate. Your answers to our questions are fateful as you may guess."

"No, what are you talking about? You don't have any right to interrogate diplomats. I don't need to answer any. I don't give up my rights as protected by the Vienna Agreement."

"You are not a diplomat. You are a war criminal. Forget those, if you start your life from now on the national conscience, we're not asking your past. We will pardon your war criminal record. We'll treat you in a humanitarian way. Your future is bright, very bright."

"What are you talking about? I'm a high-ranking South Korean official and diplomat. Look! If I ask you to work for South Korea from the national conscience, are you going to betray North Korea who you have been working for? I don't turn to North Korea. Anyway, I cannot answer your question. The international laws protect me. I don't need to answer any question."

"You don't have anything to say. How come you are a diplomat? We didn't ask you to turn to North Korea, don't be subjective."

Another agent in a white shirt opened his mouth.

I talked to him:

"You are subjective. "Turning" means to me to clean up the past and work for the "people". What do you mean by that? I cannot talk further."