

On Power Passage

Park Chan-Kyong

This essay written in 2004 is about my work *Power Passage* (2004, Mixed Media - MS Powerpoint presentation, Video projection, variable installation)

In 1972 - the year marking the beginning of Détente, Richard M. Nixon and Aleksey Nikolayevich Kosygin of the former Soviet Union approved the rendezvous plan between the U.S. and the USSR spacecraft, and 3 years later the ASTP (Apollo-Soyuz Test Project) was realized in space. There are those who collect everything related to the ASTP – from document files holding all records of the mission, photographs, pictures, and diagrams, to stamps made in the Soviet Union, Hungary, and Mongolia, commemorative coins, and pla-models. However, the obsession that far surpasses any collector's zeal is the obsession found in the project itself. The vastly complex calculations, technical specifications, and political protocols all focused on one single mission – the docking of two spaceships.

There are also people who are obsessed with the underground, not space. The South Korean organization called "Underground Tunnel Hunters," composed of former high-ranking military officers, pastors, and college professors have maintained that North Korea has already dug underground tunnels into the Seoul Metropolitan area. During the excavation to prove the existence of Hwasung underground tunnel, the hunters found a weeding hoe of a type that is not used in South Korea. They said this type of weeding hoe is used only in Vietnam.



"Underground Tunnel Hunters" is digging a suspected area for hidden underground tunnels.

The second underground tunnel dug by North Korea was found in the same year (four months before, to be exact) when the ASTP was concluded. Of course, there were far more tunnels in Vietnam during the same period. Once an underground tunnel was found in DMZ, the two sides at each end are opened to infiltrate, regardless of who created it first. By the same way, the underground tunnels shall be able to offer tourist attractions from/to either side in the future.

In 1969, the movie *Marooned* directed by John Sturges was produced based on the novel of the same title. The movie actually had a substantial impact on ASTP six years later. Philip Handler of the U.S. National Academy of Sciences who visited Moscow in 1970 used the movie's scenario to stress the importance of cooperation between the two countries in his meeting with the representatives of the Soviet space project. The Soviet representatives were quite surprised that a Soviet cosmonaut who saved the life of an American astronaut was portrayed as a hero in the movie.

In *Marooned*, there is a scene where a cosmonaut barely manages to grab the U.S. astronaut of the Ironman 1, which had veered off course in space, because he could barely reach the astronaut. The contrast between the vastness of space and the confined interior of the spaceship is a typical feature of many Sci-Fi films in space. But here, the nearness of two bodies that barely miss touching each other is more than just a

contrast to the vastness of the space, especially to Korean viewers.



Film still from *Marooned*

SF films show images of the future created in the past. Robert Altman's *Countdown* depicts the moon landing as it happened in 1968 of which is a year before Apollo landed on the moon. A scene in the movie that carries many implications is the one where an American astronaut discovers dead bodies of Soviet cosmonauts who came to the moon before him. This probably is a working metaphor of the present time. In this movie, the moon represents the earth ruined by reckless competition, while the earth becomes a beautiful planet that watches over the moon seized by destruction. The movie ends without giving a clear conclusion as to whether the astronaut left alone can return to that planet.

These SF stories were played in the future tense. But the special effect techniques are seemingly obsolete that we can see the "futuristic imagination of the past". These images put the viewers in an odd perception of time warping. The illusionistic space leaks the special effects, and the scientific images are suddenly slipped into the soap opera.

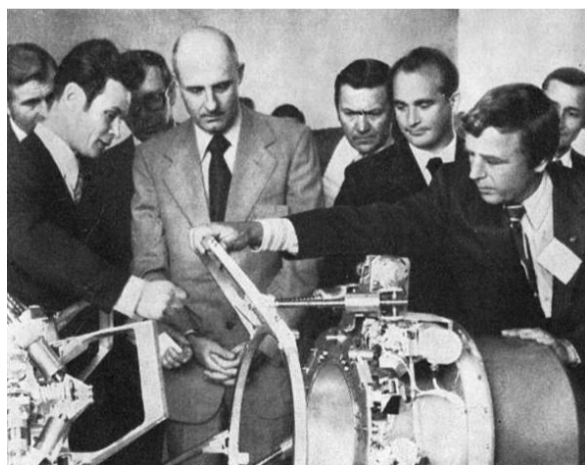
I imagine that one day the movies like *Marooned* and *Countdown* are screened in the underground tunnels of Korea, and then the world tourists are going to see some marooned spaceships at the artificial cave as experiencing both digging toil and high-end technology. Perhaps, the tourists would enjoy Korean Sci-fi films instead of US ones screened. To apply the US Sci-fi film chronology literally, the film about the space rendezvous between two Koreas will be produced in around 2010. (The Korean War was occurred in 1950. South Korean satellite was launched in 1995 and 2004, and North Korea claims the launch of satellite in 1998 and 2009.)

Some Quotations for the *Power Passage*

1. A Situationist's note on space spectacle

Power, which cannot tolerate a vacuum, has never forgiven celestial regions for being open terrains left open to the imagination. (Eduardo Rothe, 1969)

2. Apollo-Soyuz Test Project (ASTP) telecommunication record



A plate from *Soyuz-Apollo*, Rebrov, M. F. (Mikhail), Mashinostroenie (Machinostroyeniye), Moscow, 1975.

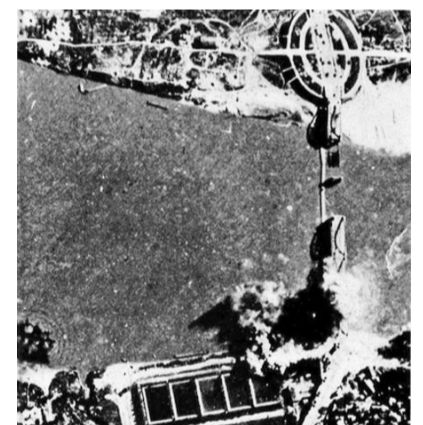
ASTP (USA) MC195/1
Time: 11:04 CDT, 51:44 GET
7/17/75

ACDR (Soyuz, please tell us when you begin your maneuver.)
ACDR (Soyuz, this is Apollo. How do you read?)
USSR Read fine.

ACDR (Yes, please tell us when you begin your maneuver-ing.)
USSR Soyuz initiating orientation maneuver.
USSR Ready?
ACDR (Yes, very slowly.)
USSR Visual orientation initiated.
ACDR (Roger.)
USSR Soyuz docking system is ready.
ACDR (We are also ready, Apollo is ready.)
USSR Do you see spacecraft?
ACDR Yes.
ACDR (We see it. It's very beautiful. We see your periscope.)
USSR That's a good picture.
CC-H Apollo, Houston. As far as our TV picture goes, it's been real good. It is, as you maneuver around, and the sunlight rises on the 2 spacecraft it does get very bright. If you're in average slave and linear. The maneuver is completed.
USSR (Roger.)
USSR Visual orientation established.
ACDR (Garble) slaving.
CC-H Good show. Let's stay there. Looking fine.
ACDR (I'm approaching Soyuz.)
USSR Oh, please, don't forget about your engine.
ACDR (not readable)
USSR (not readable)
ACDR (One half meter.)
ACDR (Less than 5 meters distance.)
CC-H Deke, Houston.
Can you close down the f stop some?
ACDR (3 meters.)
ACDR (not readable)
ACDR (Contact.)
USSR
ACDR We also have capture.
ACDR We have succeeded. 'Everything is excellent.
USSR Soyuz and Apollo are shaking hands now.
ACDR (We agree.)
CC-H Apollo, Houston. Deke, when you have a chance, we'd like to close down the f stops. We do have a good picture but it's too bright.
CC-H Yeah - right there, Deke.
DMP Is that okay, Dick?
CC-H Deke, it got a little bit better, but it's still a little bit too bright. While you were fooling around with it, though, we did get a good picture when you were closed down a little more.

(Quoted from *20th Century NASA History: Skylab Reference, Apollo-Soyuz Test Project (ASTP) Press Kit and Flight Plan*, Ring-bound catalogue published by the World Spaceflight News, 2001)

3. Han River



Destroyed bridge in Han River during the Korean War.

Man: Why has this Aunt being staring at the river for so long?
Woman: (low sobbing sound)
Man: Why are you sobbing? For what reason?
Woman: At the Korean War, we crossed the river first, and he, he, said he would follow us the day after...
Man: So, that was the last time you saw him?
Woman: Yeah... if I had known that...
Man: Listen to me, many people lost their dear lives during the war, and many of those who were close have become separated. Forget it all...
Woman: But, what he said when he sent us across still rings in my ears, and I can still see him clearly... then, how can I forget him, how?
Man: Aunt, look at this Han River. The river flows quietly as if to ask if there was a war. Time goes by like that. Time flows like the river. Forget it all. Float the past on this water.
Woman: How...how can I forget? How?

(Excerpt from the song Han River / Lyric and music by: Choi Byung-Ho and Performed by: Choi Jung-Ja, 1952)

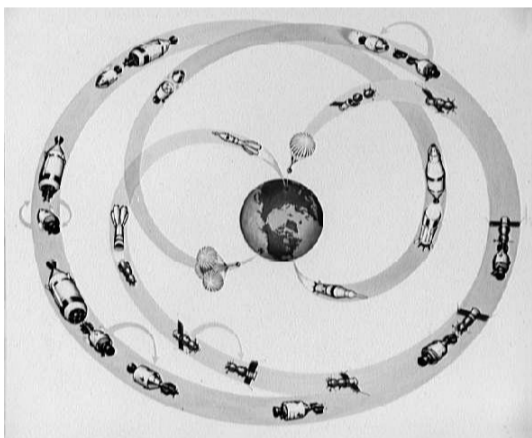
4. Docking Module

A system module inside the docking module contains control and display panels, VHF/FM transceiver, environmental control life support system components and storage compartments, Other equipment in the

docking module includes oxygen masks, fire extinguisher, floodlights and handholds, a junction box("J-box") for linking Soyuz communications circuits to Apollo, the MA-010 Multipurpose Furnace and two removable stowage lockers containing TV equipment, spare carbon dioxide absorption cartridges and miscellaneous items. Gaseous oxygen and nitrogen are stored in four identical spherical tanks external to the pressure vessel and in two pairs shielded by insulated covers. A total of 18.9 kilograms of nitrogen and 21.7 kilograms of oxygen.

Apollo's orbital atmosphere is 100% oxygen at 258 millimeters of mercury, while the Soyuz atmosphere is normally an oxygen/nitrogen mix at 760 millimeters of mercury. Transferring from Soyuz to Apollo in these conditions normally would require the cosmonauts to pre-breathe pure oxygen to purge suspended nitrogen from their blood streams, but by lowering the Soyuz pressure to 518 millimeters of mercury, crew inter-spacecraft transfers can be made without time-consuming pre-breathing. Hatches at both ends of the docking module and pressure equalization valves permit crew transfer without disturbing the atmospheres in either spacecraft.

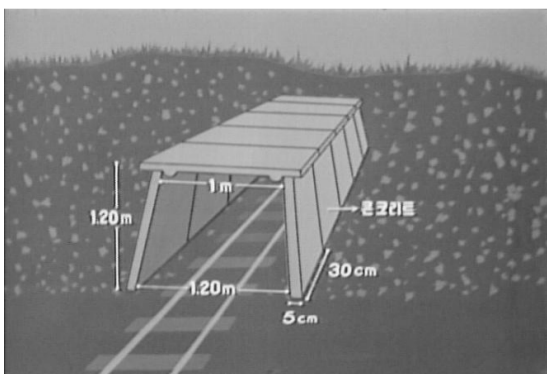
(Excerpt from *20th Century NASA History: Skylab and Apollo-Soyuz (ASTP) Image Galleries and NASA Documents plus Gemini Image Gallery*, CD-ROM published by World Spaceflight News, 2001)



NASA Photo ID: S75-27288
File Name: 10076430.jpg
Date Taken: 04/01/75
Painting by Davis Meltzer.

5. Oral Description from the 'Korean News'

"This tunnel is assembled in the shape of a trapezoid which is 1 meter height, 1 meter in upper breadth and 1 meter and 20 centimeters in lower breadth with 5 centimeters thick wall of concrete." (Excerpt from Daehan News, 1975)



Film Stills from Daehan News, 1975

Three Cemeteries

3 photographs, text and sound, 2009

Park Chan-Kyong



Jeokgun-myoo (The cemetery of the enemies), Paju, South Korea

The cemetery contains anonymous North Korean and Chinese soldiers who died in the Korean War. North Korean armed spies who were killed during their missions in South Korea are also buried here. North Korea denies the dispatch of spies to the South. This area used to be an U.S. army's dumping ground. The graves face North.



Sangpae-dong Cemetery, Dongducheon, South Korea

Officially 1224 bodies are buried here of mostly anonymous female sex workers who worked at the U.S. military campside town in Dongducheon. Camp Casey, Camp Hovey, Camp Castle, Camp Nimble, and Camp Gimbols are the U.S. army bases in Dongducheon. U.S. soldiers called the area "Little California." Korean sex workers of the campside have been replaced mostly by Filipinos and Russians during last decade.



Donghwa Gyeongmo Park, Paju, South Korea

This public cemetery is dedicated to those who lost their homeland in North Korea because of the division. The yard is demarcated into the traditional districts of North Korea as they are maintained by South Korea. The land of North Korea is insight from the alleged "best spot." Most of these spots are already reserved in far advance.