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" Это не Восток, это - встреча восточной и русской традиций, это наш контакт с миром Востока, наш взаимообмен с ним. В прозе Кима есть оба эти начала. " Л. Аннинский \*1

" Очень простой. Пиши, чтобы как можно проще было. Как само собою получится. Что выговорит душа, то и пиши, без всяких ямбов и хореев. " -- главный герой солдат Чекин в повести Поклон одуванчику

" Я буду писать ... не историю жизни, а скорее историю духа ... " Анатолий Ким

Soviet prose-writer Anatoly Kim right at the beginning of his career, as the poet in one of his long stories (Поклон одуванчику, повесть ), puzzled publishers and editors by his original style and his manuscripts were rejected time and again until he had a chance acquaintance with the Soviet actor Innokenty Smoktunovsky, who introduced him to the Leningrad journal "Aurora."

Since "Aurora" introduced Kim's "Meiko's Dog-rose" (Шиповник Мёко ) and "A Watercolour" (Акварель ) in 1973, "Moscow" printed Kim's another short story in 1974 (Месть ) to be followed by his first long story (повесть ), "Hail to the Dandelion" (Поклон одуванчику ) in 1975 again in "Aurora."

Publishing his first book The Blue Island (Голубой остров) in 1976, Kim made a fast literary career. Four Confessions (Четыре исповеди) comes out in 1978, Echo of the Nightingales (Соловьиное эхо ) in 1980, The Jade Belt (Нефритовый пояс ) in 1981, Herb Collectors (Собиратели трав ) in 1983, and his first novel The Squirrel (Белка) comes out in 1984.

In 1985, Kim's collection of short stories The Taste of Wild Plums at Dawn ( Вкус терна на рассвете ) came out. It was his second collection of short stories since the first one The Blue Island (19 stories, 1976) and it contains 40 stories in it. A book for children was published in the same year ( В лесной стороне ) and another one is to come out in 1987 ( Когда цветет миндаль ). At the moment he is engaged in his second novel. Recently, his new story was printed in the journal ( Знамя ) with the title "A Stop in August" ( Остановка в августе ). \*2

Anatoly Kim ( Анатолий Андреевич Ким ) was born in 1939 in a village of Kazakhstan and he had spent quite a long time in the Far East. He is now living in Moscow. His experience as a man includes various occupations - builder, film mechanic, artist, critic and so on. He served in the Soviet Army and in 1971 was graduated from the Gorky Literary Institute where he had tutored himself to be a writer under the guidance of V. G. Lidin ( Вл.Лидин ).

Dreaming of an artist, a poet and a prose-writer, A. Kim writes since in his twenties. To date, Kim has written about 70 short stories ( рассказ ), 7 long stories ( повесть ), and one novel ( роман-сказка ). He has made one drama based upon one of his stories in 1984 ( Плач кукушки ), which was performed by the Chosun Theatre in the Soviet Union and he is also writing literary critics.

It is not easy to write about A. Kim, a Korean writing in Russian, not because he is still a living figure but rather because he is writing with fancifully original style of his own and his colouring of stories creates a kind of whimsical world. Besides, he is a writer very much still in the process of 'becoming who he will be,' in that his chronological progress as a Soviet writer is being highly evaluated.

His works fall into three groups, though they don't form a chronological progress.

First, about 70 short stories have been printed in various literary journals and almost all of them were made into two collections of stories - The Blue Island in 1976 and The Taste of Wild Plums at Dawn in 1985. In his first collection of short stories, Kim portrays mainly the world of Koreans in the Far East and their fate full of ups and downs. With some historical background in it, their everyday life and hardship they had to face come into the picture in a world where<sup>V</sup>meet and feel things they Russian and Japanese.

Traditional Korean folklores are used to set a world bordered by life and death, through which Kim tries to create a vision of eternal life. Already in these early works, Kim's prose of painting style is noticeable within the framework of philosophical meditation.

Different from these early stories, his later works in The Taste of Wild Plums at Dawn show us the complex consciousness of modern souls. Here, the heroes are not necessarily from the Far East. They are from all over the universe. Traditional folklores are not available any more. They are full of meaningful details of contemporary urban life.

Nevertheless, his focus on human consciousness and soul continues - this time, it seems much more serious and modern. In this sense, the two periods of Kim's short stories provide a change in progress and continuation at the same time.

The second group of Kim's works can be named his meditative seven long stories(новеллы). \*3 All of these seven stories are written at the very beginning of his career as a prose

writer, from 1975 to 1981, and all of them are printed more than two times either in literary journals or in volumes. Kim has now abandoned the exotic tone of his earlier works for a more philosophical "observation" prose, at least, as far as his style and subject matter are concerned.

Again, however, he gives prominence to the theme of death in almost all his seven long stories. At the same time, the image of eternal life and immortality is repeated within a spiritual climate reminiscent of Buddhism and Oriental thoughts. In his repetition, Kim's long stories stand inbetween his earlier short stories and his novel(роман-сказка ) in a way he tries to penetrate into human soul and portray the world of human consciousness.

These two periods of short stories and 7 long stories all add up to his third stage. Through his first novel The Squirrel published in 1984, Kim has found his clearest expression although his voice is not clear enough to some of <sup>the</sup> critics. This fantastic story with a global metaphor of beasts and werewolves making a conspiracy against humanity in a bid to replace the real people stirred up controversies among Soviet critics. \*4 In this controversial novel of fairy-tail convention (Kim named this novel роман-сказка) in which the hero, writer under the disguise of the squirrel, raises a series of moral, philosophical, social and even ecological or political problems, Kim unfolds a vivid picture of today's world and criticizes it. By creating the fantastic world where 'the real blends with the surreal' and reality with fantasy, Kim brings up the most painful questions of our age and the world in which we live. He sets the world we are living

now as a fierce battle field where a host of blood-thirsty fights are going on between humanity and inhumanity, between real and unreal visions, and between reason and madness. And he continues to conclude that the tide of this battle depends on each of us, on the "accumulation of the universal energy of good." ( ... работать для накопления всеобщей энергии добра.) \*5

While showing a progressive advance as an acknowledged promising Soviet prose writer by above-mentioned three stages - short stories, long stories and a novel, Kim also has written not a few articles about Russian literature and modern Soviet prose \*6 as well as a drama "The Crying of the Cuckoo" ( Плач кукушки ) in 1984. \*7 It is a task of risk to find a place in the history of literature for a writer who is keeping on writing, but it is not always without meaning.

In<sup>20th</sup> literature in general, A. Kim is considered one of the stylists of mythological school ( мифологическое направление ) in that he deals with the world of human soul, question of existence, spiritual border of life and death, and eternal life, as do Joyce, Mann, Platonov, Marqués, Kawabata, Camus, and so on. \*8

In the outline of Soviet literature, especially for his use of national folklores and lyrical meditative style, Kim belongs to the 'non-Russian' writers of myth(миф) trend like T. Plátov and C. Aitmatov who, by "The White Steamer" ( Белый пароход ) in 1970, comes to the front of this line in the sense that Aitmatov brings the legends and folklores of Kirghizia into the long story. \*9

Belonging to the 'myth trend' of the last decade Kim is not discontinuous with the Russian tradition. He himself is not only writing about the Russian tradition in Soviet literature but confessing the influence of the short stories by Tolstoy, Chekhov,

Gogol, and Platonov. \*10 "The Hero of Our Time" of Lermontov is alive in one of his stories (Бродяги Сахалина)\*11, his "Lotus" is quite reminiscent of "The Death of Ivan Ilyich" by Tolstoy and Platonov is right behind for his "Meko's Dog-rose." \*12

With this Russian tradition behind Kim is not without his own Oriental tradition. Though his narration is quite modern, it is pervaded with Oriental cultural traditions - from the traditional Korean folklores in his earlier short stories and some of long-stories to the spirit of Oriental thought like Buddhism or such writers as Tagore, Ryunosuke, and Kawabata. Relying on the mythological methods and fantastic metaphors; he is rather obsessed with the psychological world of each character and even tries to 'lay bare those depths of human consciousness which are bordering on the subconscious.'

In this respect, taken altogether, A. Kim with such Soviet writers as C. Aitmatov and T. Pulatov forms a new line of Soviet literature, whether myth (миф) trend or Oriental/Asiatic colour, and what is more important inherits the Russian tradition, all of which creates a union of two traditions.

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