

= Cho Ki @-@ chon =

Cho Ki @-@ chon (Korean : ??? ; 6 November 1913 ? 31 July 1951) was a Russian @-@ born North Korean poet . He is regarded as " a founding father of North Korean poetry " whose distinct Soviet @-@ influenced style of lyrical epic poetry in the socialist realist genre became an important feature of North Korean literature . He was nicknamed " Korea 's Mayakovsky " after the writer whose works had had an influence on him and which implied his breaking from the literature of the old society and his commitment to communist values . After a remark made by Kim Jong @-@ il on his 2001 visit to Russia , North Korean media has referred to Cho as the " Pushkin of Korea " .

Cho was dispatched by the Soviet authorities to liberated Korea when the Red Army entered in 1945 . By that time , he had much experience of Soviet literature and literature administration . The Soviets hoped that Cho would shape the cultural institutions of the new state based on the Soviet model . For the Soviets , the move was successful and Cho did not only that but also significantly developed socialist realism as it would become the driving force of North Korean literature and arts .

Cho offered some of the earliest contributions to Kim Il @-@ sung 's cult of personality . His most famous work is Mt . Paektu (1947) , a lyrical epic praising Kim Il @-@ sung 's guerrilla activities and promoting him as a suitable leader for the new North Korean state . Other notable works by Cho include " Whistle " , a seemingly non @-@ political love poem which was later adapted as a popular song that is known in both North and South Korea .

During the Korean War , Cho wrote wartime propaganda poems . He died during the war in a United Nations force bombing raid . He and his works are still renowned in North Korean society .

= = Life and career = =

Cho Ki @-@ chon was born to poor Korean peasants in the village of Ael 'tugeu in the Vladivostok District of the Russian Far East on 6 November 1913 . The Pacific region of the Soviet Union , where he lived , was a center for Korean independence activists . He particularly drew literary inspiration from Cho Myong @-@ hui , a fellow Korean writer living in the Soviet Union who ? in believing in national emancipation by upholding socialist principles ? had already written about anti @-@ Japanese guerillas . Thus he acquired a nationalistic and class conscious worldview in his literature .

= = = Before emigrating from the Soviet Union = = =

Cho studied at the Korean Teachers College in Voroshilov @-@ Ussuriysk between 1928 and 1931 . During that time , he was also a member of the communist youth league of the Soviet Union , Komsomol .

Cho was initially supposed to enroll at the Moscow University , but he was robbed at a train station in Omsk . With no money , Cho was stranded and had to work at a kolkhoz in Omsk for the summer to get some . The rector of the Omsk University , Aleksandr Sergeevitch Slivko was touched by his fate and decided to admit him in the university . Thus , from 1933 until his graduation in 1937 , he attended the Faculty of Literature of the Gorky Omsk State Pedagogical University . Although he was not fluent in Russian upon entering the university , he graduated with excellent marks , and his time spent there amplified his Russian and Soviet sides . He returned to the Far East and took up teaching responsibilities at the Korean Pedagogical Institute in Vladivostok until all ethnic Koreans were forcibly moved to Central Asia , and the Institute along with Cho were relocated to Kzyl @-@ Orda , Kazakh SSR in 1937 . The following year Cho went to Moscow and tried to enroll at the Moscow Literature University , only to find himself arrested on the spot for breaking the law confining Koreans to Central Asia . He then returned to the Institute in Kzyl @-@ Orda and worked there until 1941 .

Between 1942 and 1943 , Cho served in the Soviet 25th Army 's headquarters in Voroshilov @-@ Ussuriysk in desk duty , and in a similar assignment in the Pacific Navy in Khabarovsk between 1943 and 1945 and in the First Far Eastern Front from October 1945 . A part of his job was to write

propaganda leaflets spread by the Soviet Red Army in Korea . Tatiana Gabroussenko thinks it is probable that he also translated the first speech given by Kim Il -sung after the liberation , on 14 October 1945 , called " Every Effort for the Building of a New Democratic Korea " , into Korean . The original speech was written by Soviet officers . Cho entered North Korea with the Red army that year .

= = = Creating model literature in North Korea = = =

Immediately after the liberation of Korea , Soviet authorities sent Cho , who was fluent in both Korean and Russian , to North Korea in order to shape the country 's literary institutions on the Soviet model . Cho diligently followed the Workers ' Party 's instructions to " immerse [oneself] in the masses " and would visit factories , villages and farms and write poems based on these experiences . His experiences in the Soviet Union helped him in producing explicitly political works . Many other authors were not equally adept to write about political subjects and were reluctant to visit places of work . His role in shaping North Korean literature was to be pivotal . Cho 's early works Mt . Paektu (MR : Paektusan , 1947) and Land (MR : Ttang , 1946) would point out the direction that North Korean literature was about to take . These very works would soon become models for North Korean literature . Upon his return , he started writing for Chosŏn Sinmun , the Soviet Red Army 's Korean @-@ language paper , working as a correspondent and translator . He translated works of such Soviet poets as Mayakovsky , Gribachev , and Jambyl Jabayev .

The literary circles of the time were divided based on divisions in North Korean politics as a whole . Cho associated himself with the other ethnic Koreans who had come from the Soviet Union . This literary group was close to the political Soviet Koreans faction .

During the Korean War , Cho worked for Rodong Sinmun and also wrote propaganda poems . Before the war , he had been a member of the Standing Committee of the North Korean Literary and Art Federation . In 1951 , he was selected the vice @-@ chairman of the unified Korean Federation of Literature and Arts (MR : Chosŏn munhakyeshul ch 'ongdongmaeng , KFLA) which was chaired by Han Sorya . He was a member of its subdivision called the Literature Organization (MR : Munhak tongmaeng) .

= = Works = =

= = = In the Soviet Union = = =

While still at the Pedagogical Institute , Cho released a novel . The novel describes anti @-@ Japanese armed struggle , and is similar in content to his later work Mt . Paektu . The novel might have acted as a prototype for it . In addition to poetry and poetic criticism , Cho was interested in drama . Cho contributed to the creation of a drama called Hong Beom @-@ do , about the revolutionary Hong Beom @-@ do , by Tae Jang @-@ chun and other Koreans living in the Soviet Union . Mt . Paektu retains elements from this work , too . He published his first poem the age of 17 in a Korean newspaper , Sŏnbong , in Russia . Between 1930 and 1933 he wrote poems such as " The Morning of the Construction " , " To the Advanced Workers " , " The Military Field Study " and " Paris Commune " . While still in the Soviet Union , he also wrote poems " To Rangers " and " Outdoor Practice " .

= = = In North Korea = = =

After moving to North Korea , he released " New Year " . Other poems by Cho include : " Tuman River " (MR : Tumanggang , 1946) about the sufferings of Koreans under Japanese rule and " Our Way " (Uri @-@ ?i kil , 1949) on Soviet @-@ Korean friendship . The Song of Life (Saeng 'ai @-@ ?i Norae , 1950) is a long epic about industrialization . It praises the country 's developing industry but fails to take note of its roots in Japanese projects during the occupation . It also features

a theme often found in Stalinist fiction : " class enemies " that seek to hamper progress . Other poems include : " Land , " " Aircraft Hunters " , " On the Burning Street " (Pul 'an?n k?ries? , 1950) , " Korean Mother " (Chos?n @-@ ?i ?m?ni , 1950) , " My Heights " (Na @-@ ?i koji , 1951) , " We are Korean Youth " (Urin?n Chos?n Ch '?ngny?nida , 1951) as well as lyric poems " Swing " (K?ne) and " Sitting On a White Rock " (H?in pauie anjaso , 1947) . The serial poem Resistance in Yosu (Hangjaeng @-@ ?i y?su) tells about the Yosu uprising in South Korea . The lyric epic Land was written on the Workers ' Party 's orders on producing works about the land reform in North Korea after the liberation , and was the first poem to describe the topic . Cho wrote lyrics for " Mungyong Pass " , a song about Korean People 's Army soldiers fighting their way through Kyonggi to Ryongnam .

While all of the poems are thoroughly ideological , some South Korean scholars such as Yi Chang @-@ ju of the North Research Institution , have sought to emphasize Cho 's lyrical side in order to " domesticate " him to serve rapprochement between the two countries ' cultural orientations . Some of Cho 's poems have been adapted into popular music lyrics that enjoy popularity in the South as well as the North . " Whistle " (H?ip 'aram) , " Willow " (Suyang p?t?l) and " Swing " are love songs that were inspired by a more relaxed cultural atmosphere following the translation of Russian @-@ language poetry into Korean . These influence include Mikhail Isakovsky 's " Katyusha " , to which " Whistle " in particular bears likeness . " Whistle " , adapted as a popular song in 1990 , is often seen in the South as a non @-@ political song . However , according to Gabroussenko , South Korean observers often fail to notice the political and cultural elements borrowed from Isakovsky and Soviet lyrical poetry . In " Whistle " , for instance , the couple embodies exemplary socialist traits :

== == Mt . Paektu == ==

Cho 's long epic poem Mt . Paektu was written in February 1947 and published in 1948 in Rodong Sinmun . It was the first poem written about Kim Il @-@ sung , whom the original version of the poem simply refers to as " Commander Kim " . The poem is a classic in literature portraying the anti @-@ Japanese struggle and tells the story of the Battle of Pochonbo which took place in 1937 . The poem inextricably links Kim Il @-@ sung 's person with Paektu Mountain , the namesake height of the poem ; a connection that has remained central in North Korean propaganda to this day .

The poem has its origins in Cho 's fascination with the anti @-@ Japanese guerrillas , including Rim Chun @-@ chu and Ch 'oe Hy?n , with whom he had met . The creation of the epic was politically motivated , too , as the Soviets , who had dispatched Cho to North Korea , wanted to strengthen Kim Il @-@ sung 's grip on power . Publications presenting him as a legendary anti @-@ Japanese hero were needed , and so Mt . Paektu was born . The work is dedicated " to the glorious Soviet Army that liberated Korea " , and is written with the Soviets and not the Koreans in mind .

Due to vigorous promotion of a " mass culture " in both the output and readership of literature , copies of Mt . Paektu were printed by the hundreds of thousands , more than any work in the history of Korean literature before that . Generally speaking , the poem was well received . The public was interested and young readers acclaimed it . It was liked in the KFLA as it employed revolutionary romanticism in its portrayal of Kim . Kim personally liked the poem , too , and began visiting Cho 's home . In his memoirs With the Century , Kim writes that he was the first person to listen to Cho recite the poem and liked its " jewel @-@ like sentences " . More than aesthetic , Kim says he was attracted to the content and they both " shed tears " when Cho chanted a passage about fallen comrades .

In truth , the content of Mt . Paektu exaggerates Kim Il @-@ sung 's activities during the liberation struggle . The poem presents Kim as having heroic , transcendental , humane and warm qualities . He is represented as a popular hero that the people look up to , suggesting that he is the right person to lead the newly established state . Politically , Mt . Paektu was very effective in the newly founded state . As such , it became a " new classic " , a model for the cult of personality of Kim Il @-@ sung perpetuated by subsequent works of literature in North Korea . According to B. R. Myers , the work exemplifies particular traits of an early cult of personality built upon Soviet Marxism ? Leninism and bloc conformity , which were soon replaced by Korean ethnic nationalism of writers

like Han Sorya . While Cho 's Kim Il @-@ sung is a brilliant strategist who has masculine qualities like strength and intellect , in Han 's works he embodies traditional Korean virtues of innocence and naivety having " mastered Marxism ? Leninism with his heart , not his brain " . The ethnically inspired style of Han would establish itself as the standard of propaganda over Jo 's . Benoit Berthelier , however , sees continuity in Cho 's work and contemporary propaganda . According to him , Cho can be credited with having created a genre of " revolutionary romanticism " , which systematized the use of legends and supernatural imagery in Kim and his followers ' cult of personality .

Long epic poetry was not a popular genre in North Korea before Mt . Paektu , but it was in the Soviet Union where Cho had immigrated from . Poema and Mayakovsky 's prosody and poetry were also among Cho 's influences that can be seen in Mt . Paektu . These Russian stylistic influences gave Mt . Paektu its peculiar characteristics that prompted mixed reactions from the North Korean public . For instance , some in the literature circles were unfamiliar with the concept of a lyrical epic and thought of it as an improbable amalgam of genres , criticizing the work for being indistinguishable from ordinary prose . According to Alzo David @-@ West , lecturer at Aichi Prefectural University and North Korea Review newsbrief editor , the relatively favorable reaction to Mt . Paektu compared to some other literature testifies to North Korean readership being capable at being both a receptive and a dismissive audience .

South Korean scholars have presented two competing views about Mt . Paektu : academics of the older generation typically dismiss Mt . Paektu as " personality cult literature " . Younger generation minjung and leftist scholars , however , see guerrillas other than Kim Il @-@ sung ? such as Ch 'ŏl @-@ ho , Kkot @-@ pun , and Sŏk @-@ jun ? and by extension , the people , as the " hero " of the story . For some of them , like Sin Tong @-@ ho , excluding the role of others than Kim Il @-@ sung is an outright obstruction for creating a national unity in literature .

The 1947 text has been revised three times because of changes within the political system of North Korea to produce " heavily revised chuch 'e [Juche] editions " : in 1955 , 1986 and 1995 . The original version of the poem invokes Russian Civil War heroes Vasily Chapayev , Nikolay Shchors and Sergey Lazo , while a newer revision omits them and concentrates on indigenous assets :

The work was adapted on stage by Han T 'ae @-@ ch 'ŏn . It has been translated into English , Arabic , French , German , Russian , Spanish , Chinese , Japanese , and Mongolian . Of these , the Mongolian one was deemed " distorted " by North Koreans and sparked a diplomatic crisis in 1976 , resulting in expulsion of the Mongolian ambassador to the country .

= = Death and legacy = =

Cho died on 31 July 1951 in his office room in Pyongyang during a United Nations forces ' bombing raid in the war .

Mt . Paektu received the National Prize , first class , in 1948 . Cho 's works were awarded the Festival Prize , the country 's highest literary honor , modeled after the Stalin Prize . He also was awarded the Order of the National Flag , second class , for his work during the war in 1951 , as well as a posthumous National Prize , first class , in 1952 for his cycle of poems Korea is Fighting (MR : Chosŏnŏn Ssaunda , 1951) .

His resting place is at the Patriotic Martyrs ' Cemetery , in Pyongyang . Today , Cho is regarded as the founding father of North Korean socialist realist poetry , or indeed poetry in general , or even North Korean literature as a whole . In the mid @-@ 1950s many Soviet Koreans , including Cho 's close friends , were discredited in purges . According to Gabroussenko , Cho 's untimely death in 1951 may have spared him his reputation and ensured his continued popularity in North Korea today .