

# Kimleesoong and the Dating of the Autarchy

The Urth list — 3 messages, 2 voices, 12 Mar 1998

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C R Culver — 12 Mar 1998, 21:55

Fellow Urthers:

There has often been talk on this list of how far in the future the Commonwealth of Severian's time is. I was perplexed, however, at the personage of Kimleesoong (Kim Lee Soong) that Jonas mentions in the antechamber of the House Absolute. Jonas says that he is seven generations removed from the current generation. Unless the prisoners there were extremely long-lived, this would place him after the reign of Ymar and Typhon. We saw in UotNS that the days of Ymar and Typhon are far removed from ours, and there are no names reminiscent of modern times like the obviously Korean name of Kim Lee Soong. (Jonas also mentions that Korea has been under the ocean for ages). How do we solve this problem, where a man from our time is present in a future perhaps 1 million years away? Here are my hypotheses:

1) the Antechamber is somehow connected to the Corridors of Time, and our Korean man stumbled upon them. This is possible, but I am not sure it happened.

2) Kim Lee Soong was a sailor just a Jonas was, from a few decades or centuries after our time, who came back to Urth millions of years after his time, and was then imprisoned. Indeed, Jonas appears to be in much the same circumstances, considering that, feverish, he babbled in Korean in the antechamber (Korean is a nasal, monosyllabic language. I am sure it was Korean and not Chinese, because Severian does not speak of tones). Strangely, this is the only place I can find where Jonas is culturally identified. Severian never seems to remark on any Asiatic features with Jonas, however. This is the possibility I most strongly support.

3) The Urth of the Autarchy is not so far in the future as we suspect, a possibility I will, however, reject.

What do you all think?

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Dan Parmenter — 13 Mar 1998, 10:35 · follows C R Culver

From: C R Culver <CRCulver at aol.com>

There has often been talk on this list of how far in the future the Commonwealth of Severian's time is. I was perplexed, however, at the personage of Kimleesoong (Kim Lee Soong) that Jonas mentions in the antechamber of the House Absolute. Jonas says that he is seven generations removed from the current generation.

Isn't it the prisoners who make this claim? And isn't it also mentioned that some of the previous generation also claimed to be seventh generation descendants of the original prisoners? I don't have the book with me so I'll have to double check that. Maybe it's just part of their lore: "We're all seventh generation prisoners..."

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C R Culver — 13 Mar 1998, 21:00 · follows Dan Parmenter

Dan Parmenter said:

Isn't it the prisoners who make this claim? And isn't it also mentioned that some of the previous generation also claimed to be seventh generation descendants of the original prisoners?<

But still, the fact that they would remember that ancient name from our time is staggering and improbable. I still think Kim Lee Soong was a sailor who returned to Urth at just about the same time Jonas did, which would have put him in the Monarchy/Autarchy.

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