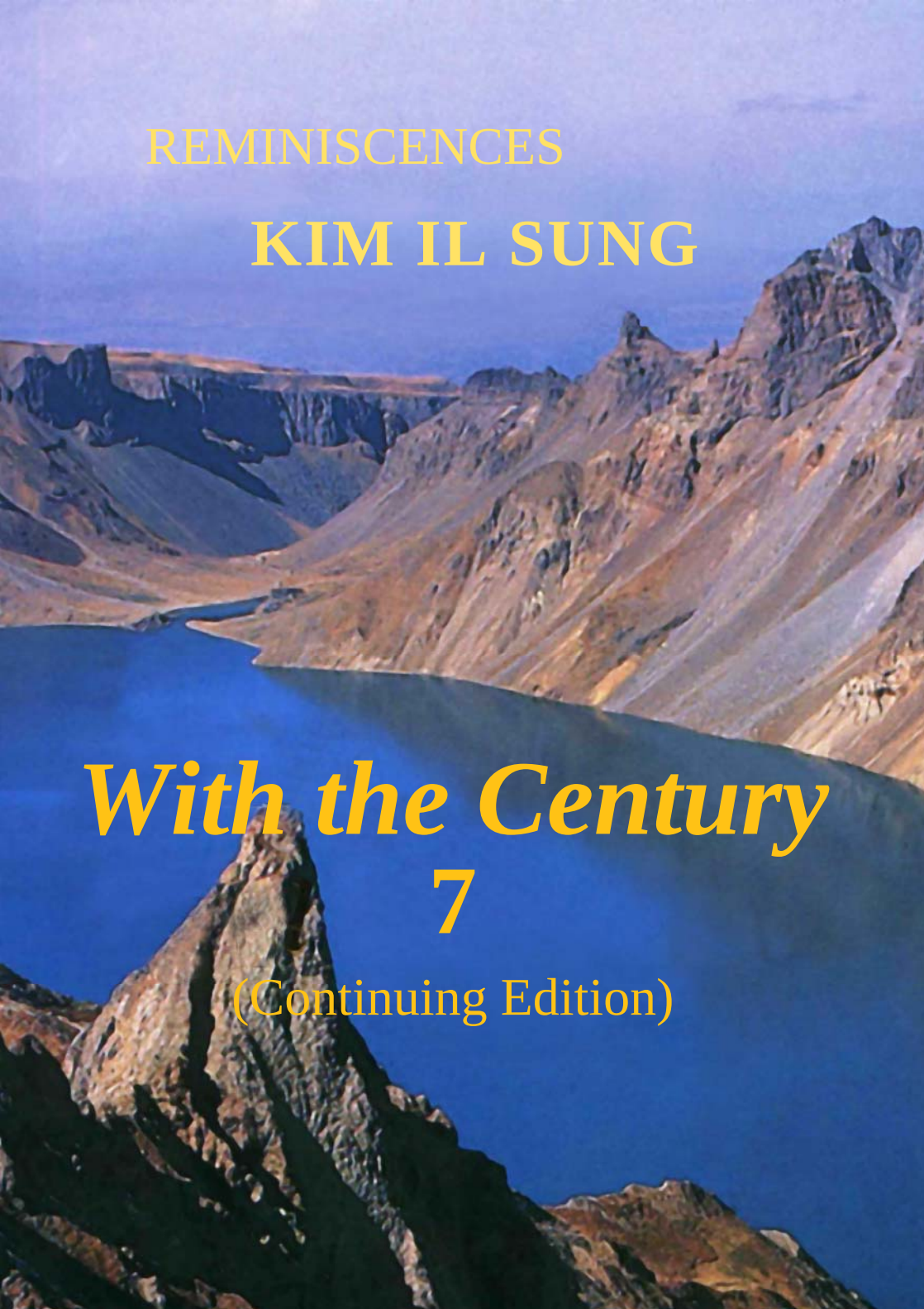


REMINISCENCES

KIM IL SUNG

With the Century

7

(Continuing Edition)

REMINISCENCES

KIM IL SUNG

With the Century

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FOREIGN LANGUAGES PUBLISHING HOUSE
PYONGYANG, KOREA
Juche 96 (2007)

The great leader Comrade Kim Il Sung will always be with us



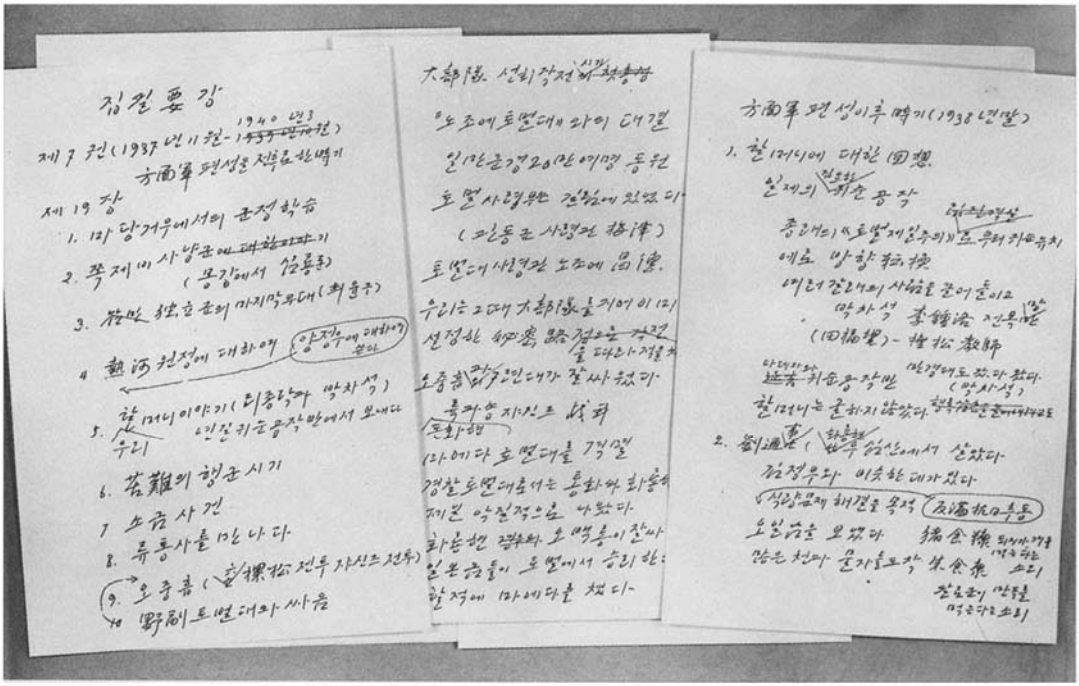
Part I

THE ANTI-JAPANESE REVOLUTION

7

The great leader Comrade Kim Il Sung looked upon his people as his God, loved them dearly, trusted them deeply and devoted everything to the cause of their freedom and happiness while he himself suffered hardships of every description throughout his life.

Kim Jong Il



Part of the outline the great leader Comrade Kim Il Sung prepared for his memoirs



Comrade Kim Il Sung, Commander of the Korean People's Revolutionary Army, who experienced many tribulations on the bloody road of the anti-Japanese struggle

Legends of the Mysterious Anti-Japanese Hero General Kim Il Sung



Foreign publications of those days often described the great leader Comrade Kim Il Sung as “a legendary hero”.

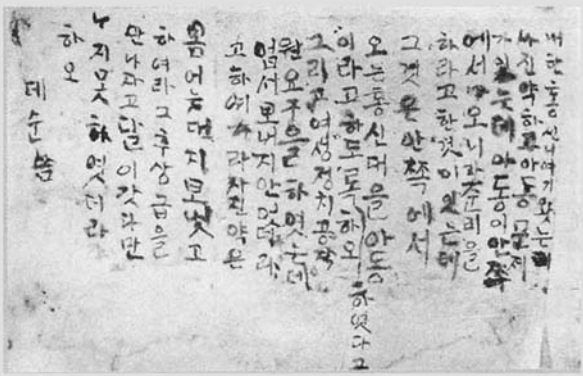


Alarmed by the Upsurge of the Anti-Japanese Revolution, the Japanese Imperialists Step Up Their Brutal Repression



The Hyesan Incident

Pak Tal in chains (on the left is police officer Choe, an agent of the Japanese imperialists who was put in charge of the “Hyesan incident”)



Prison letter from Ri Je Sun to his organization. He wrote it on waste paper, using his own blood as ink.



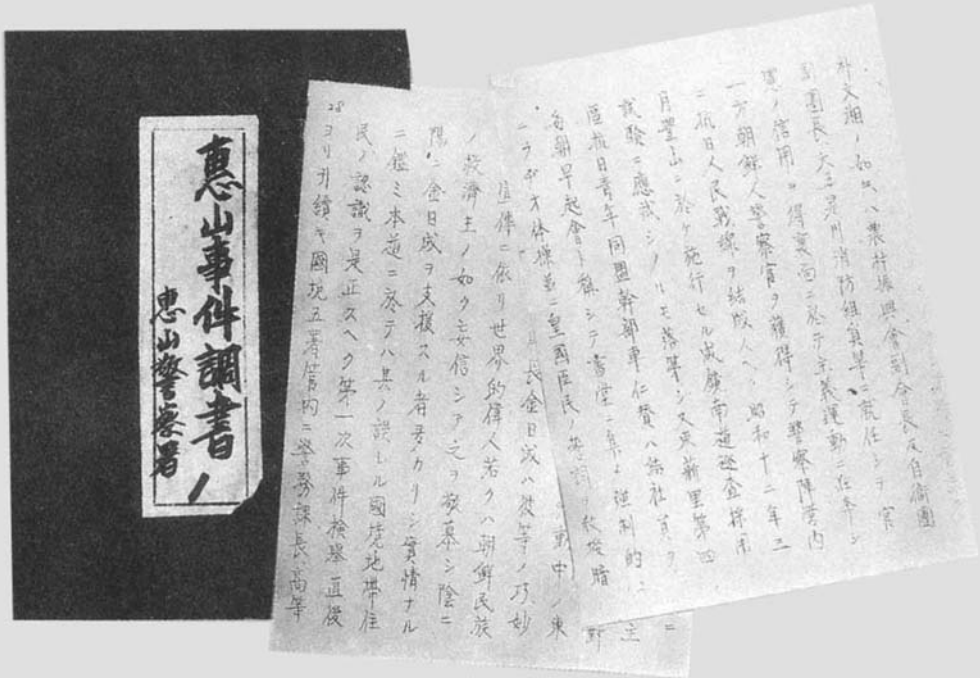
Ji Thae Hwan



Ri Ryong Sul

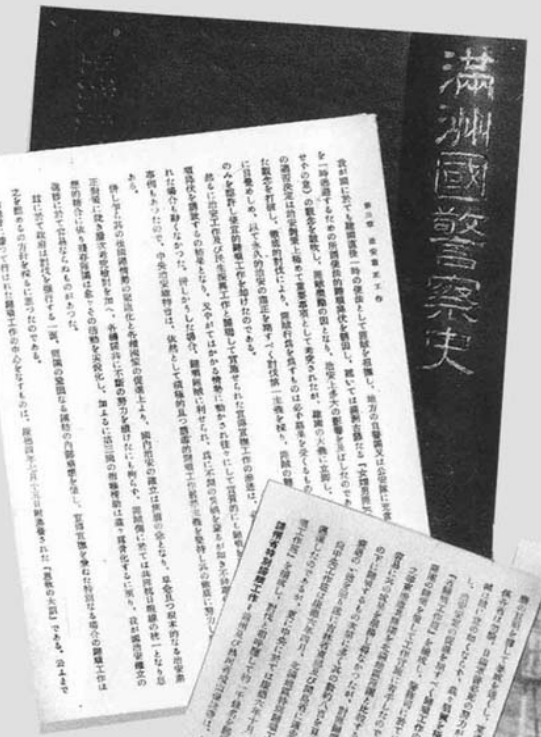


Kim Chol Ok



A Japanese imperialist document dealing with the “Hyesan incident”

Japanese Imperialists' "Surrender-Hunting" Operations


滿洲國警察史

Materials concerning the decision to combine the conventional "punitive-attack-first policy" with "surrender hunting"



The "Nagashima operative squad" lines up to move off.

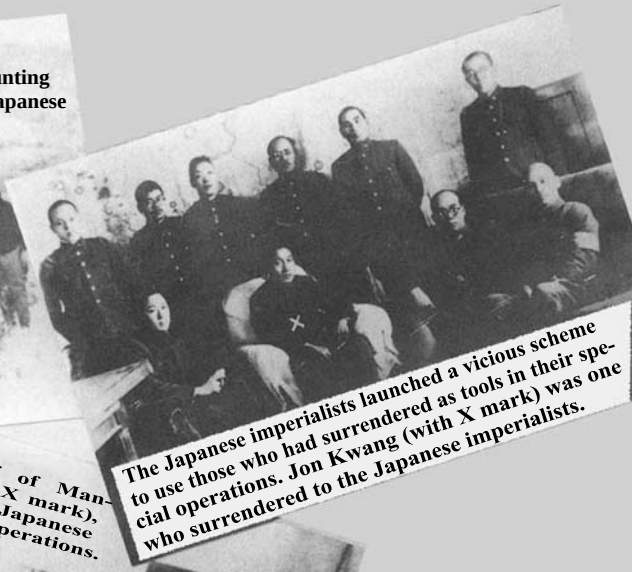
The documents show that the "Central Special Surrender-Hunting Section" worked on Kim Il Sung's army. *(History of the Manchukuo Police)*



The Japanese and Manchukuo army and police exchange information on "punitive" operations at a joint meeting of gendarmerie, police and the Concordia Association.



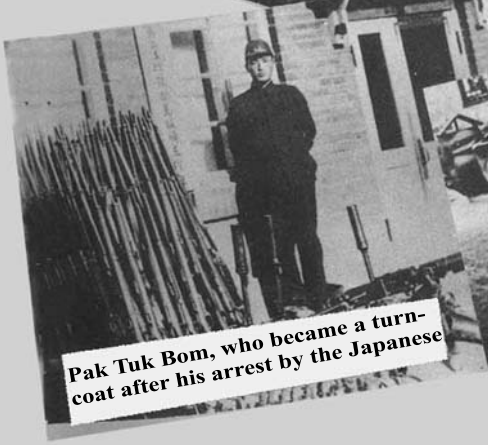
"Surrender-hunting team" of the Japanese imperialists



The Japanese imperialists launched a vicious scheme to use those who had surrendered as tools in their special operations. Jon Kwang (with X mark) was one who surrendered to the Japanese imperialists.



Feng Qing-ou, chief of Manchurian *jiajiali* (with X mark), collaborated with the Japanese imperialists in special operations.



Pak Tuk Bom, who became a turncoat after his arrest by the Japanese



Former guerrillas mobilized by the Japanese imperialists for "punitive" operations against their recent comrades-in-arms



早く帰順するように

一九三五年、寒さだき、或る日のことであつた。まだ氷の解けきらぬ図們江を越えてカタコト吉林へ向う列車のコンパートの中で、一等旅客とはおよそ不似合な、七十余りの老婆が一人ぼつねんと足もとに目を落し坐つていた。

その向い側に坐つている屈強な二人の日本人もおし黙つて、一人はこの老婆の顔を、一人は過ぎ行く窓外の景色を眺めていたが、ややあつて

「どうです、あなたは、孫が可愛いいと思つたら早く帰順するようにと手紙を書くことです、何度も同じ事は言いませんよ……」

日の役い年配の男は、官憲は、丁寧であつたが、どこか威圧するように言つた。老婆は目を閉じて相変らず黙つていた。

いま、いわれたように、そうしなさい。そうすれば郎も喜ぶなるし、お前さんも郎に会えるし、万事がうまく行くじゃないか？

こうして、もつたいないような扱のできるのも皆な日本の偉い人の現むだよ……」と逃和以の若い男が言う。しばらくして老婆は口を開いた。「手紙が書きたきゃ、お前さんたちでお書き……、わしは、あれが何処に、どうしているかも知られえだ」彼女は吐き捨てるように言うともう一言も口を開かなかつた。

これは東満の特務機関が、三四年の満州国成立とともに、ますます強化した朝鮮民族運動に策を弄やして、その首領であつた金日成の老祖母を利用しておびき出すために取つた人質政術の一駒であつたという。金日成の首に二十万円の賞金をつけるなどそれから一月してからであつた。東満、北鮮に神出鬼没の活躍をしていた金日成とその一派の動きは、日本軍部にとつては始末におえぬ存在であつたが、東満と北鮮では彼はすでに大きな存在だつたといわれる。

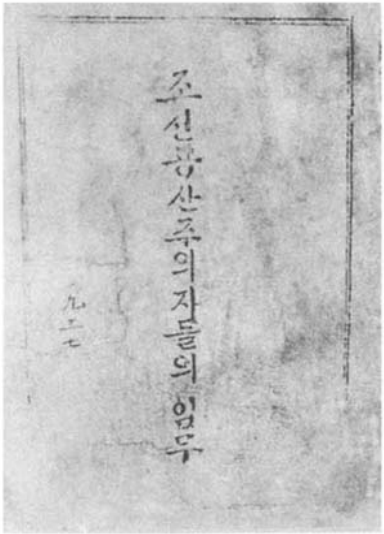
Huju Inn (top), where grandmother Ri Po Ik stayed when she was forced to trek about Manchuria by the Japanese imperialists. A publication that deals with the events at that time

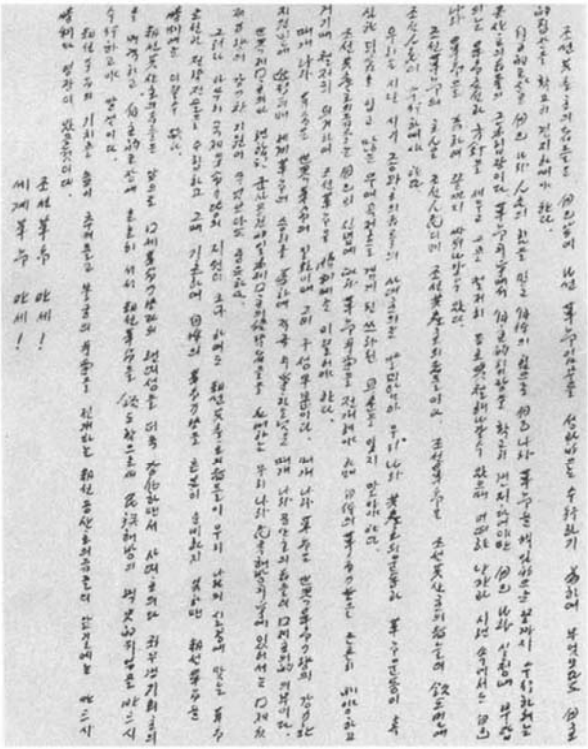


Ri Po Ik, grandmother of the respected leader Comrade Kim Il Sung

The immortal work, *The Task of Korean Communists*, outlined the character and immediate tasks of the Korean revolution.

The booklet was written by the great leader Comrade Kim Il Sung in the autumn of 1937. (Shown below is part of his manuscript)





Various documents that dealt with the character, tasks and future of the Korean revolution from different points of view were circulated in great numbers around the Communist International.





Political and Military Academy in the Forest



The secret camp in Matanggou, Mengjiang County



Choe Kyong Hwa



Kim Yong Guk



Kang Ton

Ma Tong Hui and His Family



Ma Tong Hui



**Jang Kil Bu,
his mother**



**Kim Yong Gum,
his wife**



**Ma Kuk Hwa, his
younger sister**



The great leader Comrade Kim Il Sung calls on Ma Tong Hui's mother.

While visiting Jang Kil Bu, who had been left alone after dedicating her son, daughter and daughter-in-law to the revolution, the leader told her earnestly, **"From now on, Mother, I'll look after you in place of Tong Hui."**

Unstained Revolutionary Honour; Immortal Flowers



Choe Hui Suk

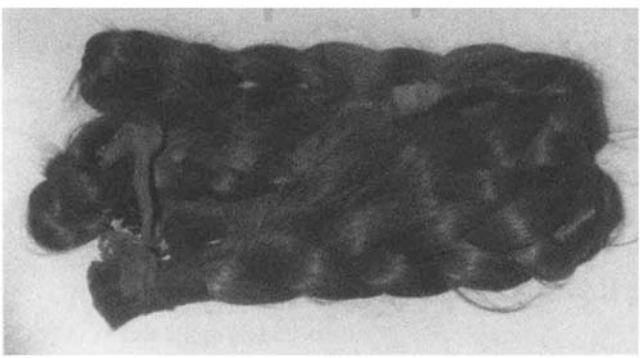
"I can still see victory in the revolution!"–This was the shout of defiance by woman guerrilla Choe Hui Suk just before she died at the hands of the Japanese imperialist hangmen. They had gouged out her eyes before they executed her.



Ho Song Suk



An Sun Hwa



Braid of hair left by Ri Kye Sun, proof of her unstained honour and glorious life as a revolutionary

Officers of the Guerrilla Army Who Died Heroic Deaths



Pak Son Bong



Pak Su Man

A few busts among many at the Revolutionary Martyrs Cemetery



Jong Il Gwon



Kim Il, political commissar of a regiment of the KPRA

Trusting the People and Enjoying Their Assistance

A rock with a stone on it: a way of signalling by the people of Jiazaishui that they were ready to send food to the guerrilla army

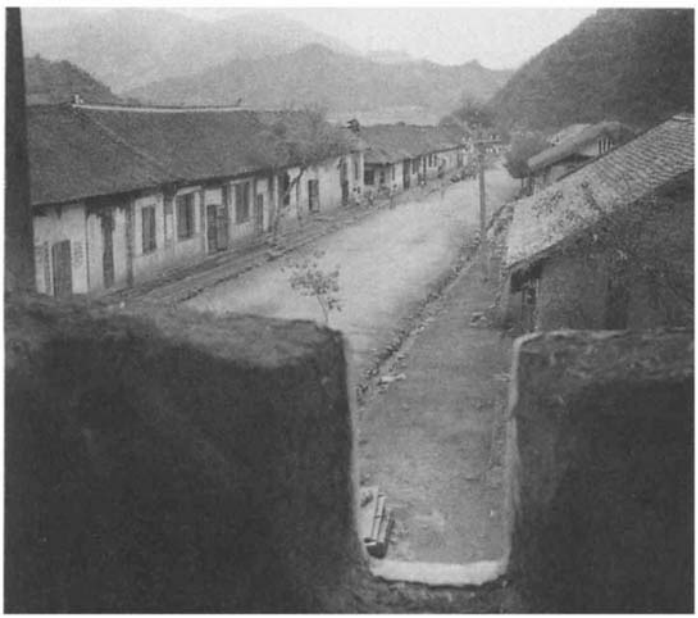


View of the village of Jiazaishui



Battle Sites in Changbai

Shierdaogou



Liudaogou

Japanese Imperialist War of Continental Aggression Expands Day by Day



A mobile unit of the Japanese army in the Xizhou campaign



Shanghai in flames after a Japanese air raid

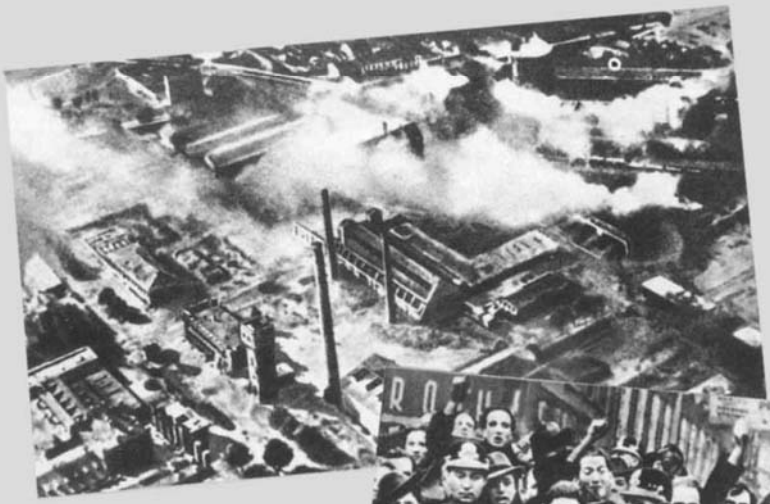


Corpses of the people of Nanjing, murdered by the Japanese forces

Cloud of War Hangs Heavily over Europe



Ceremony congratulating the signing of the Anti-Comintern Pact between Japan, Germany and Italy, held in Osaka, Japan

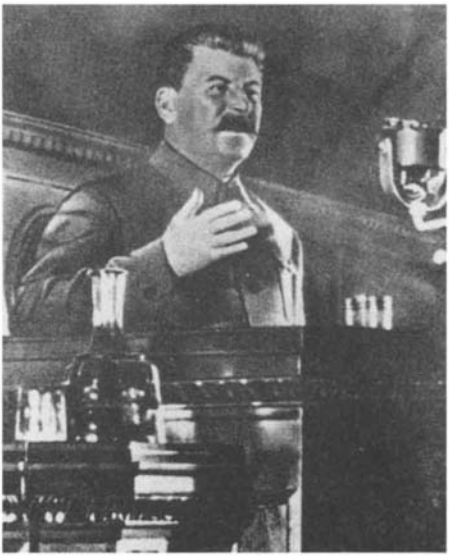


Occupation of Poland by Nazi Germany and air raid on Warsaw



Nazi invasion of Czech

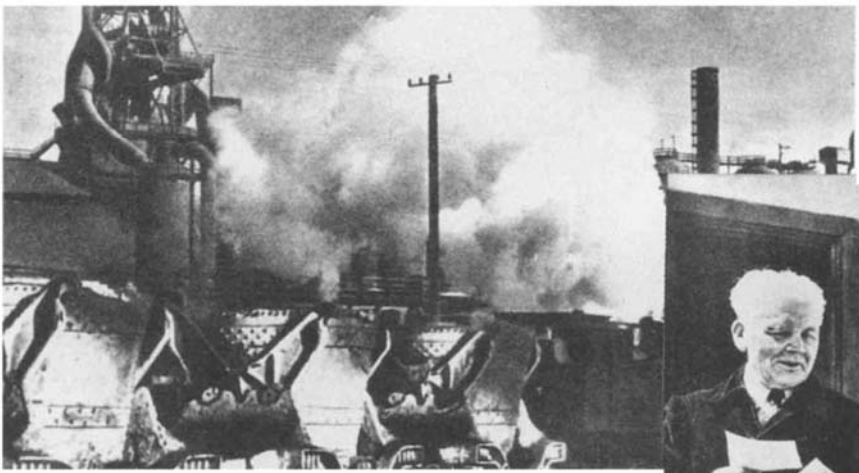
Successful Promotion of Socialist Construction in the Soviet Union



Stalin delivers a speech in the Kremlin.



Deputies adopting a new constitution for the Soviet Union



Newly-built large metallurgical base



Soviet workers benefit from the social security system.



The working people enjoy some pleasant recreation.

Intensification of Anti-Japanese War in China



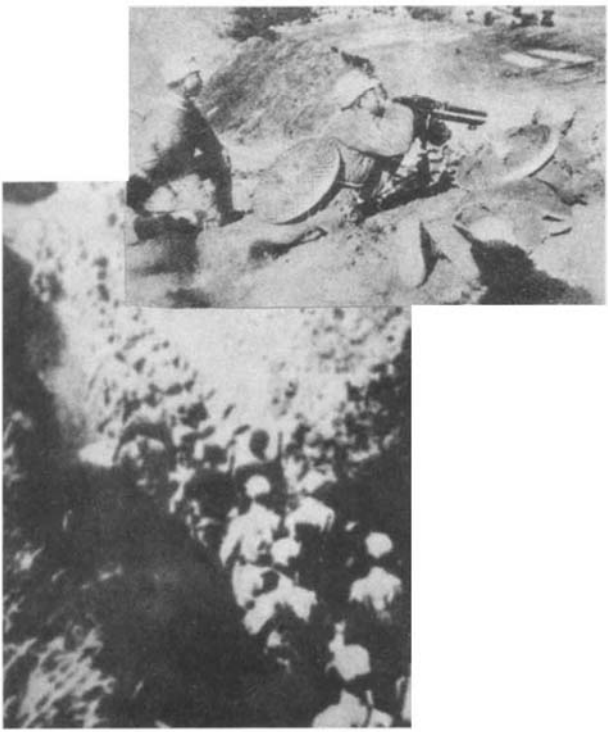
Mao Ze-dong talks to peasants in Yunan.



Zhu De



Zhou En-lai



The Battle of Pingxingguan: a column of the 8th Route Army makes its way into battle position; fighting in position.



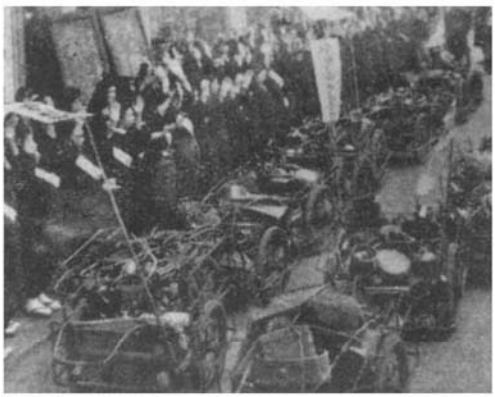
After the Battle of Baituan: soldiers of the 8th Route Army hail their victory from a signal-fire turret on the Great Wall.

Repression and Plunder by Japanese Imperialists Grows with Expansion of Their Continental Aggression



The Japanese Carry out their "Labour Draft Act".

Provoking the Sino-Japanese War, the Japanese imperialists plundered Korea of its manpower and material resources.



The Japanese imperialist plunder of hardware



Graffiti on the wall of a dormitory of Koreans at a coal-mine in Kyushu, Japan: "Want to go home!!!" "Hungry!" "I wish I could see Mother."



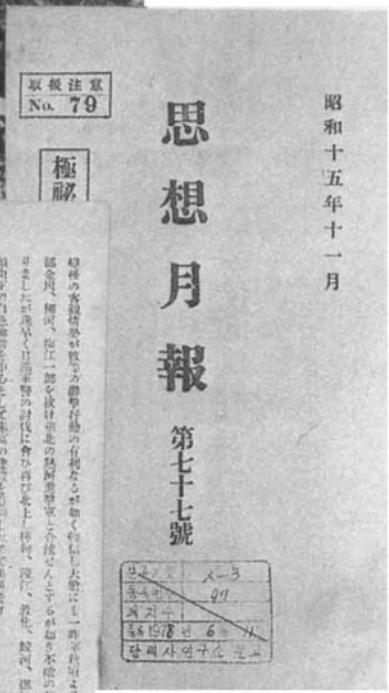
Korean children drafted for "work service"



A cavalry unit of the Northeast Anti-Japanese Allied Army



The 8th Route Army advancing towards Rehe





Japanese official document on the Rehe Expedition

The military adventurist Rehe Expedition seriously affected the anti-Japanese armed struggle.

The Nanpaizi Meeting

(Nov. 25–Dec. 6, 1938)



Site of the Nanpaizi meeting



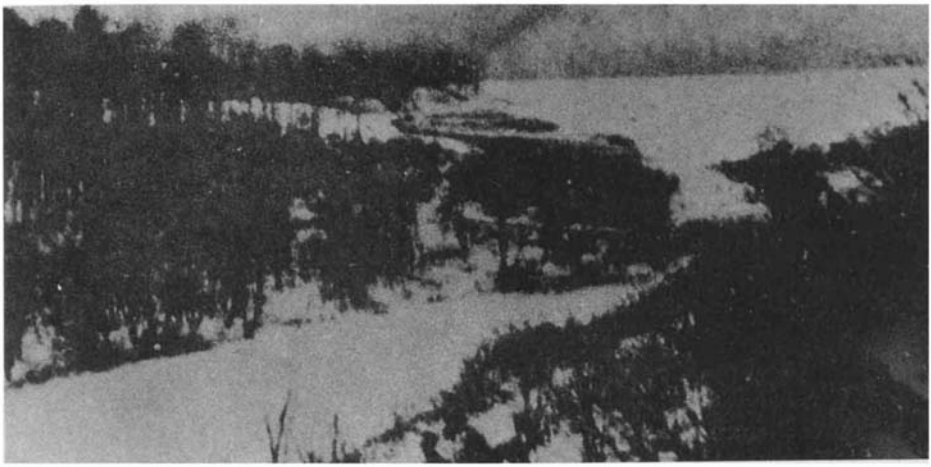
So Chol



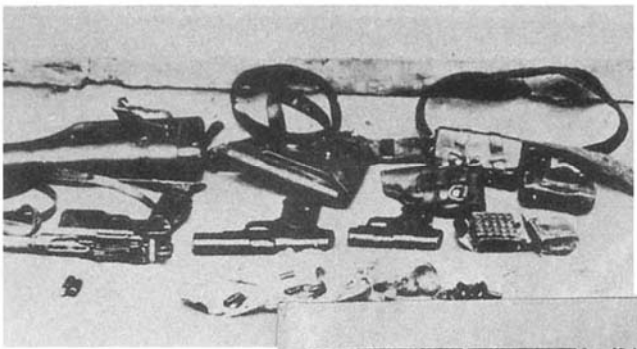
Ri Tong Gol



Pak Song Chol



The area where Yang Jing-yu carried out his activities



楊靖宇印

Weapons, ammunition and stamp carried by Yang Jing-yu

A Japanese publication introducing Yang Jing-yu



王道楽土の理想と挫折

楊靖宇と東北抗日連軍

国立国会図書館調査員
東京女子大学講師 伊藤一

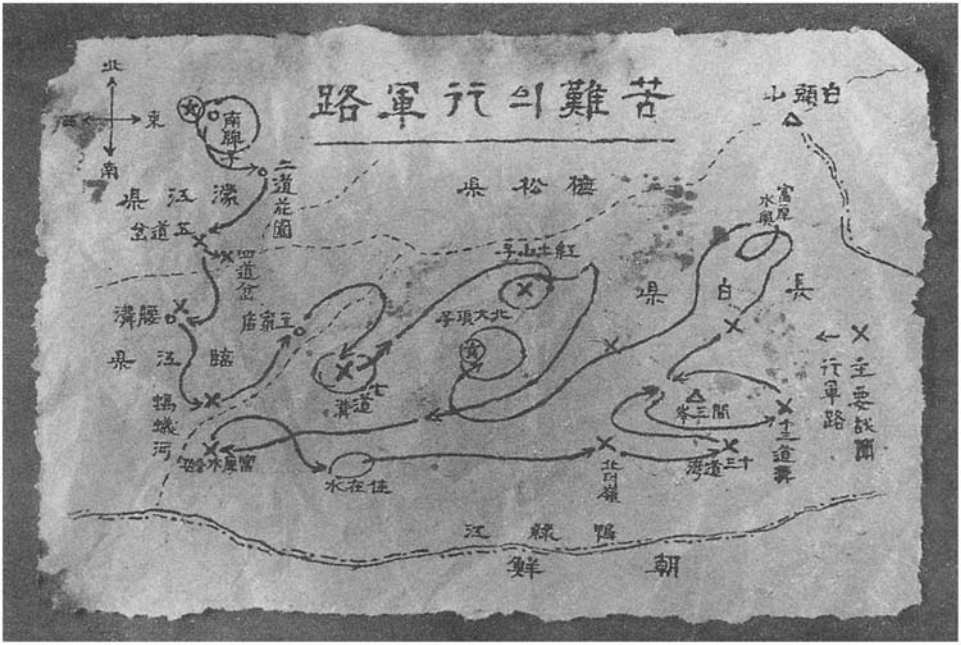
楊靖宇（ヤン・チンユー）の名は、「満州」（正しくは「滿洲」。この語は中国語では今日「満族」と呼ばれる民族の旧称であり、元来中国東北地方を指す地名としての用法はないが、日本では一般に地名として用いられ、本文の対象が主として「満州国」時代であって、当時は中国共産党も「満州省委員会」とか「南満」「東満」といった語を使用していたので、小論もこれを踏襲する）抗日ゲリラの指導者として、日本では金日成に次いでよく知られている。作家の澤地久枝氏は、一九八一年夏、解放後初めての外国人として吉林省靖宇県に楊靖宇終焉の地を訪ね、同地の「老百姓」や研究者等にインタビューして「もうひとつの満洲」（文藝春秋）にまとめている。

青年時代の楊靖宇

The Arduous March



The unbreakable revolutionary spirit and noble communist morality displayed by the anti-Japanese revolutionary forerunners during the unprecedentedly Arduous March are an ideological and spiritual motive force, a force that will continue to ensure the victory of our revolution in the present and the future, exactly as it did in the past.



Route taken in the Arduous March



Han Ik Su



Choe In Dok



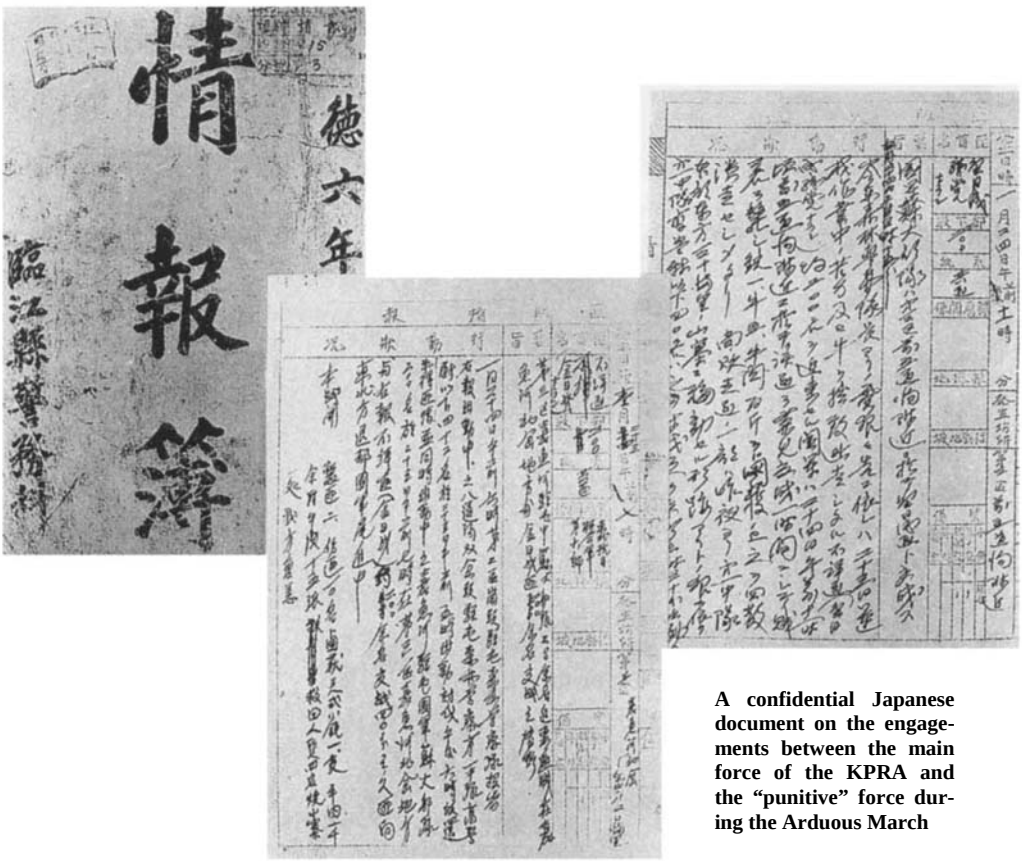
Ri Kwon Haeng



Ji Pong Son



Kim Jong Dok



A confidential Japanese document on the engagements between the main force of the KPRA and the "punitive" force during the Arduous March

Comrades-in-Arms from the Independence Army



Choe Yun Gu, the last commander of the Independence Army



Kim Myong Jun



Hong Chun Su



Training ground of the Independence Army in Sanyuanpu, Tonghua Province

BACK TO THE HOMELAND AGAIN



Site of the Beidadingzi meeting, held in April 1939



金日成○團主力과
討伐隊激戰演出
白頭山麓密林地帶서
森警隊와激戰
白色地帶로匪團逃入



金日成一味
咸南に潛入
わが警備隊と交戦中
目下交戦中
老人縊死

Newspapers of those days reporting the KPRA advance into the homeland



Konchang bivouac site

Mupho bivouac site





Kapsan-Musan guard road



Pegaebong bivouac site



House in which the great leader Comrade Kim Il Sung conducted political work



Slogan-bearing trees in the Chongbong bivouac area. The handwriting is that of Comrade Kim Jong Suk

Revolutionary Site of the Victorious Battles in the Musan Area

Monument to the Victorious Battles in the Musan Area



Part of the Samjiyon Grand Monument



Kim Se Ok



Choe Won Il



Jo Myong Son

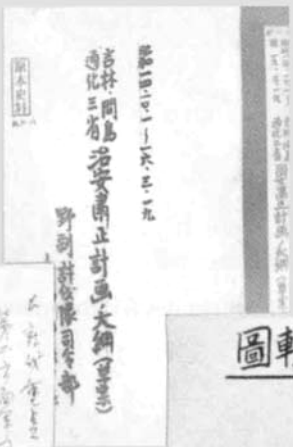
Large-scale Japanese "Punitive" Operations as Part of "Special Clean-up Campaign for Maintaining Public Peace in the Southeastern Area"

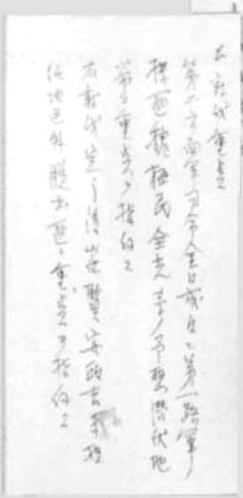


Nozoe making a report about the "punitive" campaign to the commander of the Kwantung Army



A guard post of the "punitive" force



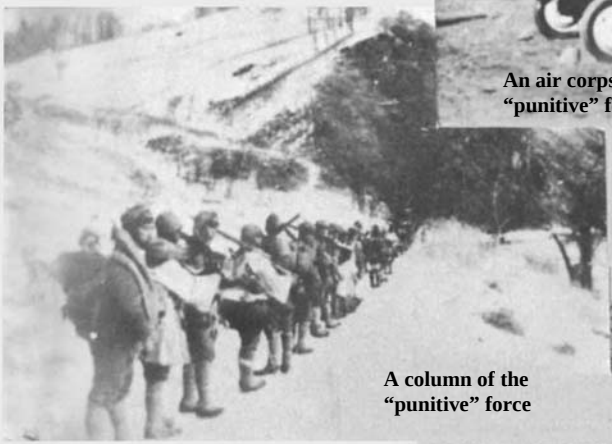




The outline of the "plan for clean-up campaign" and a geographical comparison map of the area under "punitive" action

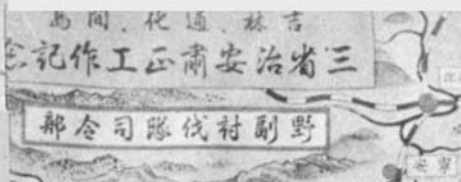


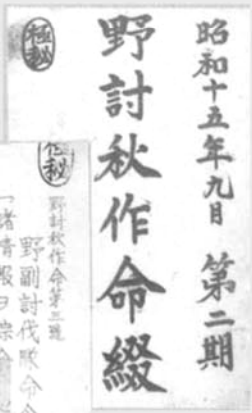
An air corps of the "punitive" force



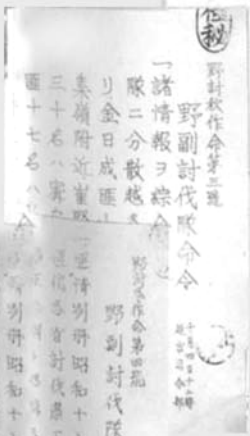
A column of the "punitive" force

Documents of the Japanese imperialist "punitive" force confessing that it was impossible to annihilate the main force of the KPRA





昭和十五年九月 第二期
野討秋作命綴



野副討伐隊命令







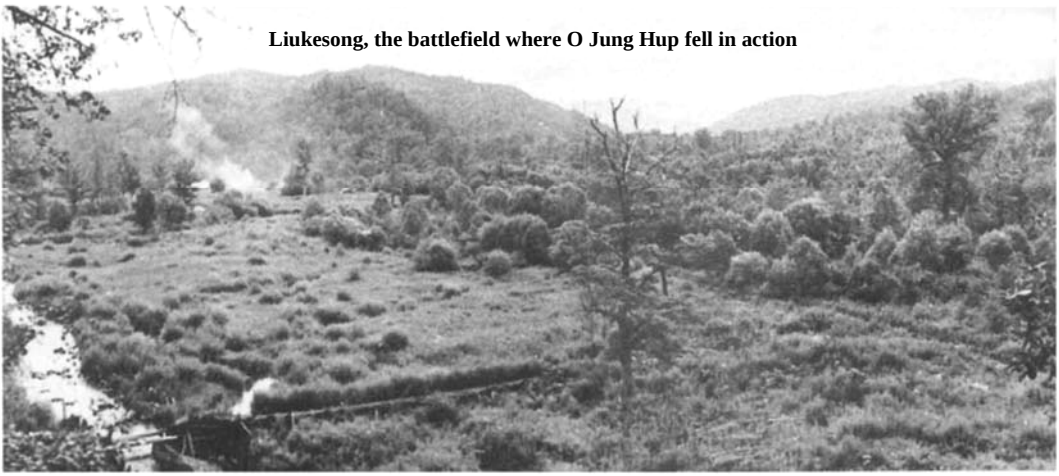
O Jung Hup

Regimental Commander O Jong Hup: The Spirit of Defending Headquarters of the Revolution with One's Life

"I have been working for the revolution for over five decades in the company of many cadres, but I have yet to see a man as loyal and meticulous as was Comrade O Jung Hup."

Kim Il Sung

Liukesong, the battlefield where O Jung Hup fell in action





Choe Il Hyon



Kang Hung Sok

Great Victories in the Battles of Damalugou and Hongqihe

Site of the Battle of Hongqihe



“Monument to Fierce Battle” in memory of Maeda’s unit annihilated by the anti-Japanese guerrillas at the Battle of Hongqihe, and a reminiscence of Unami, commander of the “police punitive force” and Maeda’s immediate superior



前田中隊が全滅した大馬鹿溝戦闘

会社員　宇波　彦次郎

間島省の満州国警察にいた私が全日成将軍のひきいる抗日部隊の討伐に参加したのは、1938年から41年にかけてであった。

当時、関東軍司令官は満州東北部（吉林、間島、通化の3省）で「治安粛清」を強化するにあたり、日本軍、満州国警察、鉄道警備隊を一体とした討伐作戦をくみ、野副陸軍少将を討伐司令官に任命し警察討伐大隊（前田武市中隊ら4コ中隊）を編成した。

私はその大隊長として4コ中隊と鉄道警備隊2コ中隊をひきい、地区討伐隊長布上大佐の指揮のもとに抗日部隊討伐にあたった。

間島省は住民の90パーセントが朝鮮人で、かれらは抗日部隊がひそかに入ってくると、食糧や牛などを提供し、積極的に援助した。

困難な情報収集のなかで、比較的たしかな情報として「全日成将軍は吉林市の学校を卒業した。きわめて優秀で、政治的判断力、組織指導力はずばぬけており、信望があつかった」というのがあった。（註—全日成将軍は吉林市の毓文中学校で、師範学校をふくむ市内の各学校の学生たちによる反帝組織をつくり反日運動を指導した）

全日成将軍のすばぬけた指導力は、抗日遊撃闘争のなかでも遺憾なく発揮されたようだ。とくに、たくみな誘導作戦や待伏せによっていためつけられることが多かった。

あるとき、森林伐採場が全日成部隊の襲撃をうけたという急報がはいった。伐採場は警備が比較的手うすだし食糧が豊富なためよく襲撃をうける。しかも労働者たちが抗日部隊を支持しているためどうしてもねらわれやすいのだ。

雪のなかを大いそぎで追跡した。森林に入るところで足跡が消えている。よくみると消した形跡がある。「こっちだ！」とそのあとを追っていくと、いつのまにかもとの位置にもどっていた。こういうことは一度や二度ではなかった。

1940年3月11日、紅旗河の渓谷にある大馬鹿溝が全日成部隊に襲撃された。大馬鹿溝は山林警察中隊本部があり、討伐隊の拠点だった。本部がやられ自動車修理所は焼かれ、武器、弾薬、食糧、被服がうばわれた。

布上地区討伐隊長は、警察討伐大隊に日本軍の大場、赤堀部隊と協同作戦をくみ、全日成部隊を追跡、せん滅せよと命令した。

私は前田武市中隊にその任務をあたえた。3月25日、前田中隊は大馬鹿溝から少しはなれたところで全日成部隊と出あい、大激戦となったが、前田中隊長以下全滅という結果に終った。待伏せ作戦にかかったのだった。この前田中隊の全滅は討伐隊に大きなショックをあたえた。

全日成部隊は地理に明るく、たくみな戦術を駆使してくるため、密林の討伐作戦はほとんど成功しなかった。

また、全日成将軍の部下には優秀な指揮官が多かった。崔賢隊長、呉白龍隊長などは関東軍のなかでも名が知れており、どれだけいためつけられたかわからない。

当時全日成パルチザン部隊は、われわれは全日成将軍のひきいる朝鮮人民革命軍だ。祖国光復のためたかいに妥協はない。

「討伐隊はわれわれに武器、食糧、衣服を補給してくれるもっとも歓迎すべきお客さんだ」と意気さかんであった。

いま朝鮮民主主義人民共和国は全日成首相の指導のもとにすばらしい発展をとげている。

すぐれた指導者のもとに前進している朝鮮人民は必ずや祖国の統一を実現するであろうと、私は自分の体験をとおして確信している。

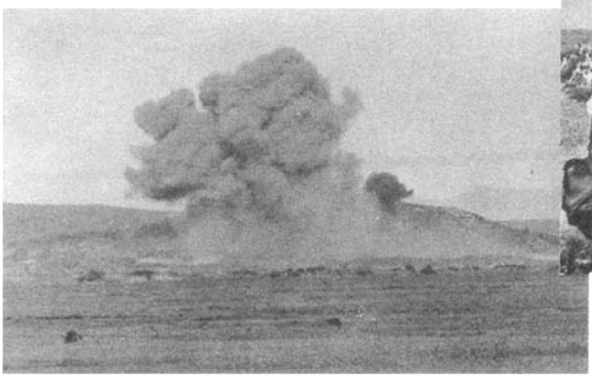
“Let Us Defend the Soviet Union with Arms!”

Hostilities Between the Soviet Union and Japan Along the Border; the Khasan and Khalkhin-Gol Incidents



Soviet commander Zhukov





Soviet soldiers guarding the border on Lake Khasan. Air raid by the Soviet air force on the disputed territory



Soviet artillery on alert in Khalkhin-Gol

The Japanese army suffered an ignominious defeat in Khalkhin-Gol.



Japanese infantrymen on a forced march across the grassland for an attack



Cease-fire negotiations at Khalkhin-Gol between the Soviet Union and Japan



Kim Jin



Pak Won Gyu



Jon Tong Gyu



Pak Kwang Son



Ryang Hyong U

In the Flames of the Anti-Japanese Revolution (2)



Kim Sam Son



Kim Chol Jin



Kim Pyong Su



Choe Sun San



O Jae Won



Son Jong Jun



Han Thae Ryong



Han Chon Chu



Ri Tu Ik



Ri Jong San



Ri Jong In



An Jong Suk



Kim Ji Myong



Song Sung Phil



Ri Yong Gu

On Publishing the Continuing Edition of *With the Century*, the Reminiscences of the Great Leader Comrade Kim Il Sung

In the final years of his life Comrade Kim Il Sung, the sun of mankind and the greatest man who has ever appeared in the world, planned to write his memoirs in the form of immense volumes that would sum up his career. He made tireless efforts to bring this about in spite of approaching old age, and as a result, six volumes have so far been published.

His reminiscences, *With the Century*, have produced a storm of response both at home and abroad since their publication, being a priceless saga that can be used as an illuminating text in the life and struggle of the people. They teach their readers the theory, principles and methods of revolution and inspire them with love for their country, their fellow citizens and their comrades.

The fatherly leader's sudden death when he had written only part of the memoirs was an extremely painful loss, and we greatly regretted the suspension of their publication.

Fortunately, however, the great leader himself had drawn up a general plan of this work, as well as a detailed programme of it, leaving behind many of his own manuscripts and voluminous reminiscences of major historical events and people.

The Central Committee of the Party has been authorized to publish continuing volumes of *With the Century* on the basis of the great leader's programme and through the use of manuscripts, reminiscences and innumerable historical records preserved in the Party library.

The continuing series of *With the Century* will contribute greatly to exalting the noble and respected leader Comrade Kim Il Sung as a great revolutionary, a great statesman and a great man who dedicated his life of over 80 years to the prosperity of his country and nation and to human

happiness in general. The memoirs will celebrate his imperishable achievements and encourage in us the unshakeable belief and honour that the fatherly leader will always be with us.

The Central Committee of the Workers' Party of Korea

April 15, 1996

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CHAPTER 19

Overcoming Trials

The Matanggou Secret Camp

The Weasel Hunter

The Last of the Independence Army Forces

Village Headman Wang and Police Chief Wang

Expedition to Rehe

My Meeting With Yang Jing-yu

Grandmother Ri Po Ik

In the Forest of Nanpaizi

November 1937–November 1938

1. The Matanggou Secret Camp

The former name of Jingyu County in Northeast China was Mengjiang County. In that county is a vast forest called *paizi*, and in the eastern part of the forest is a place called Matanggou.

It was there that the main force of the Korean People's Revolutionary Army carried out intensive military and political training for four months, from the end of November 1937 to the end of March the following year.

In later years, whenever the education of schoolchildren, students, officials or soldiers was under discussion, the great leader Comrade Kim Il Sung always used to refer to the experiences of studying during the anti-Japanese revolutionary struggle.

The following is a part of the great leader's recollections as he spoke to people who were studying the history of the anti-Japanese revolutionary struggle.

For about four or five months in the winter of 1937, the officers and men of the main force of the KPRA carried out intensive military and political training at the secret camp at Matanggou, Mengjiang County.

It is known that there was intensive training also at the Tonggang Secret Camp for about a month in spring that year, so you may wonder why another cycle of training was needed. Actually, there is nothing extraordinary about it.

The KPRA was not simply a military force; it was a revolutionary army that considered both political and military affairs to be important. Acquiring political and military qualifications was essential not only for the armed struggle but also for work among the people, united-front work and the efforts to demoralize enemy soldiers. That was why so much energy was spent on the education and training of the soldiers of the revolutionary army. Studying was an important part of their training.

As you know, we have long believed that people are the masters of everything and that they decide everything. Having this viewpoint, we looked upon ideology as the decisive factor affecting the victory of the revolution.

That it is man who makes the decisions means, in the final analysis, that it is his ideology and his intellectual abilities that decide everything. Man's ideology and intellectual ability must be cultivated steadily through study.

A number of urgent circumstances also required us to organize two sessions of intensive military and political training that year. It was a time when quite a few people had become dispirited at the thought that Japan was about to swallow up the Oriental world. After provoking the Sino-Japanese War, the Japanese army occupied a wide area of China without difficulty. This event caused people to start wavering. Even some of the people who had fought a little to win back the country now withdrew into their back parlours and relapsed into simply worrying about the future of the country, or ran about in pursuit of earning a livelihood. In the ranks of our revolutionary army, too, faltering elements began to appear, though not many.

If we had not concentrated on ideological education and military training for our men in these circumstances, it would have been impossible not only to strengthen our own revolutionary force, but also to carry the independent line of our revolution through to the end with confidence.

Confusion created by this or that line spread in the name of the Comintern also posed a major problem.

The Left adventurists, who were entrenched in the Comintern in those days, issued the line of the expedition to Rehe, which was highly unsuited to the actual situation at the time and did tremendous harm to the revolutions both in Korea and in China.

An *Action Programme of the Korean Communist Party*, allegedly drawn up by a group of proponents for a reconstruction of the Korean Communist Party, and the text of a speech made by a certain Kim at the 7th Congress of the Comintern, were in circulation and were winning considerable popularity among those who strongly desired communism. It is understandable that Korean communists, who had been swayed to the right and the left in their

efforts to find a correct guideline after the dissolution of the Party, tried to get pointers on which way to go from the *Action Programme of the Korean Communist Party* and from the speech made at the Comintern Congress.

The sound of Korean voices ringing from the forum of the Comintern Congress or from its mouthpiece was, of course, welcome.

Regrettably, however, the *Action Programme of the Korean Communist Party* and the speech at the Comintern Congress contained many words and phrases that did not accord with the specific situation of the Korean revolution.

Already at the Kalun meeting we had defined the character of the Korean revolution as an anti-imperialist, anti-feudal democratic revolution, not as a bourgeois democratic revolution, and we had the experience of implementing the line of people's revolutionary government in the guerrilla zone.

We believed, therefore, that we must first give the officers and men of the KPRA a correct understanding of the independent line of the Korean revolution.

This was one of the reasons why I wrote *The Tasks of Korean Communists* and used it as a textbook for the intensive political training we had organized. In this article I dealt again with the character of the Korean revolution and its immediate objectives, and outlined the tasks of the Korean communists in carrying out the Korean revolution along an independent line. I thought it was also necessary to organize military and political training again in order to toughen our recruits politically and militarily.

Matanggou, which was far away from the base of enemy rule, was an ideal place for the military and political training of the revolutionary army during the winter months that year.

I still remember that on our arrival at Matanggou we ate potatoes baked in a stove that had been installed by the advance party. The potato crop always did well in Mengjiang no less than in Fusong and Antu. Some of the potatoes were as large as a wooden pillow, and only a single one would fit into a gourd. On top of all that, the potatoes were delicious.

We first held a meeting of military and political cadres and set out courses

of study for each man and officer, and then saw to it that each unit, each organization and each study group held a meeting at which the men vowed to study hard. “Studying is also a battle!” and “Studying is the primary task of a revolutionary!” were the slogans we set up at the beginning of the military and political training. I made sure that the slogans were put up in large letters on the walls of all the barracks.

Not many fighters in the guerrilla army had received regular education. Ma Tong Hui, Choe Kyong Hwa, Kim Yong Guk, and Kang Ton were nicknamed “university students” because they were relatively learned, but in fact they had gone through primary or secondary education at most. The men all came from poor families and had had no access to schooling. So Chol was a graduate of a medical college, and as such he was the most highly educated of all the soldiers. But that did not mean that he was from a rich family. He was so determined and diligent that he had been able to work his way through the college. In our unit not many comrades were so well informed or learned as people like Pak So Sim, Cha Kwang Su or old man “Tobacco Pipe”.

In the early days of the training period at Matanggou, some recruits were reluctant to attend political lessons, although they took part in military training. Pak Chang Sun was typical. He did not even know how to write his own name, but he was not ashamed of it. Instead, he bragged that, though illiterate, he could fight better than anyone else. He stayed frequently away from study sessions. When asked why, he used to answer that he was such a dunce that he would never learn to read or write, and that the best way for him to spend his time would be to practise shooting and kill many Japanese.

One day I called him and in talking to him pointed at a maple in front of him. I asked him what it might be best used for. He answered that it was suitable for making the handle of an axe. I then asked what he should do with a young bull if he wanted to put it to work once it had grown up. He replied that a ring should be fixed through its nose.

Having been an experienced farm hand, he knew about such things.

I said: “Your answers are correct. You know them from your farming experience, otherwise you would be ignorant about them. The same applies

to the work of the revolution. A man who knows what tool is needed for a particular job and how it should be used will be a good revolutionary. An ignorant man does not know that the maple can be used to make a good axe-handle even if he sees it. A man who does not know how to strike the enemy cannot destroy great numbers of them. You don't defeat the enemy only by using a gun. If you really don't want to study, we'll send you back home. How can you carry out the arduous task of revolution when you say that you cannot study because it is too difficult? There is no alternative but to ask you to turn in your gun and go home to do farm work. Which way will you choose?" He was surprised to hear this and looked very sad.

Because he had come to us to fight for the revolution, Pak Chang Sun could not leave us simply because he hated studying. Hence he now applied himself to this task.

There was another recruit, a certain Kwon, who neglected his education, complaining that he was too much of a blockhead. Whenever he was advised by his comrades to study harder, instead of listening to them, he used to argue that General Hong Pom Do, an illiterate like him, had been a good commander in the Independence Army–where he had picked up that story, God only knows–and that it was nonsense to say that an illiterate could not work for the revolution. His avoidance of studying dwarfed even that of Pak Chang Sun. He was such a die-hard and trouble-maker that his company commander and his political instructor brought his case to me.

I wrote a note and told my orderly to deliver it to the recruit. I also got the orderly to warn everyone in the different companies not to read the note to the recruit.

When he received the note, Kwon was embarrassed. Without a doubt, it was a serious case for a rank-and-filer not to be able to understand in a message what his Commander wanted. The man went around calling on his friends and asking them to read the note for him, but the latter made one excuse or another for refusing his request. Now, pale with anxiety, he ran about from platoon to platoon, from company to company, asking a favour from anybody he could get hold of. But nobody would read the note to him.

What anguish he suffered! As a last resort, Kwon came to see me and begged me to tell him what I had said in the note.

I read it out: It said that he was to do a certain thing by a certain hour and report the result to Headquarters. The order was urgent. But he had come to me with the message far too late to report. Having failed to execute the order given by his Commander, he hung his head, sweat pouring down his face.

"There, you see!" I said. "You were unable to carry out the Commander's order because you could not read. Supposing you receive such a written order from me when you are working behind enemy lines. What will happen then?"

Shedding tears, the man apologized and said he was wrong. From then on he studied hard and became a well-informed officer, both militarily and politically.

By the way, I'll tell you about another illiterate man who studied hard and developed into a veteran fighter.

In our days at Wangqing there was a man named Kim Man Ik in my unit. The local people nicknamed him *guniang*, which means "girl" in Chinese, because he was fair complexioned, gentle and handsome. But unlike a guniang, he was nine feet tall.

In his early years he had belonged to the Young Volunteers and participated in the defence of Xiaowangqing. Immediately after his enlistment in the guerrilla army he was appointed to Choe Chun Guk's company and showed himself to be an excellent fighter. He was born in a remote mountain village and had never seen a train until he was twenty. He was so pure that his mind was as clean as a sheet of white paper.

Once, on a mission to raid a train, he caused some amusement among his comrades. Anticipating the raid, he lay prone with his ear resting on the rail. Thinking this strange, one of the men asked what he was doing. "Well," he said, rising to his feet, "I wondered what a train was like and now I know: it's an iron sleigh whooshing along on iron bars." Even this ignorant boy, however, learnt from us how to read and write, took charge of youth work in his company later and even went on to teach his men. He took part in the operations to liberate Northeast China and returned to Korea. He served as a

battalion commander of Kang Kon's division, and then as a regimental commander.

I wonder if any of the books dealing with the Fatherland Liberation War have given an account of the fact that he commanded his unit skilfully in the battles to liberate Seoul and Taejon? He fell on the Raktong-River line. Although seriously wounded in his belly and neck, he refused to be evacuated and continued to command his unit for two days until he died.

The comrades of the secretariat and the printing shop worked hard to ensure the success of military and political training. They set up a publishing centre at a little distance from the secret camp and put out a lot of textbooks and reference materials needed in training. Choe Kyong Hwa, editor of *Jongsori*[1], and Kim Yong Guk, who was in charge of the publication of *Sogwang*[2], were first-rate writers in the secretariat. They and old man "Tobacco Pipe" wrote commentaries on the textbooks and literary pieces helpful to trainees, and included them in the army publications. They also obtained true-to-life articles and battle accounts from enthusiastic readers. Even members of the class in which the basics were taught, to say nothing of the self-teaching class, were highly enthusiastic about making contributions to newspapers and magazines throughout that winter. Writing widened their own mental horizons and increased their zeal to learn.

The basic subjects for political education were the preservation of independence in the revolution, revolutionary faith and the revolutionary spirit of self-reliance. These subjects reflected the needs and the acute situation of our revolution after the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War. Keeping our line of independence in those days was vital to the Korean revolution, as is still the case today. *The Ten-Point Programme of the Association for the Restoration of the Fatherland, The Tasks of Korean Communists* and similar documents were used as major textbooks for political education at Matanggou because these clarified our independent attitude towards the revolution.

We also devoted great efforts to military training at Matanggou. The central task of this form of training was to assimilate completely the contents

of *Guerrilla Actions* and the *Guerrilla Manual*, in which the systematic rules of guerrilla warfare were listed. Commanding officers concentrated on tactical training, and the men were instructed mainly in marksmanship and drill movements. It was training in rules, combined with practical skill.

The study of regular army tactics was combined with drill in guerrilla tactics. Regular army tactics were included in the curriculum partly for the purpose of gaining knowledge of the enemy from a tactical point of view, and more importantly with a view to equipping ourselves with the knowledge needed to carry out the great task of raising a regular army after the liberation of the country.

We frequently organized tactical field exercises in simulated battle conditions, and also gave the rank and file tactical training. The recruits, who had no idea of the value of a map, were taught map-reading and direction-finding through the use of the compass.

We also engaged in a battle now and then so that the newcomers might consolidate the knowledge acquired in training. The battle of Qingjiangdianzi and the raid on the village of Jingantun were fought during the training period at Matanggou. Our men also laid in ambush once to capture supplies from the enemy.

When raiding Jingantun we lost Choe Kyong Hwa; and Kang Ton, who got frostbite in his feet because of carelessness in this raid, fell in a subsequent battle. Both Choe and Kang had joined the guerrilla army in Changbai. Unlike ordinary recruits, they had been in charge of large underground organizations in the Changbai area before enlisting in the revolutionary army, and since they were intellectuals, a great deal had been expected from them.

Choe Kyong Hwa had been picked up and trained by Kwon Yong Byok when Kwon was guiding Party organizations and organizational work of the ARF in West Jiandao down at Wangjiagou. I will not describe his activities at Wangjiagou because I have mentioned them on a number of occasions.

Kang Ton was a man we had dug up and trained in West Jiandao. Although he had finished only the advanced course of primary school, he had continued to teach himself by reading written lectures for middle school and

a history of social development. He had undertaken mass enlightenment work in the initial period of his activity and contributed greatly to inculcating anti-Japanese patriotism in the people's minds. The night schools he had established and guided became renowned and he had trained numerous revolutionaries at these schools. There were many of his pupils in our unit, among them, Ri Ul Sol. Nowadays, a man who has promoted and developed a youngster who becomes a hero is praised a great deal. In this context, Kang Ton was a highly meritorious man.

At Yinghuadong Kang had joined an organization of the ARF and organized the Anti-Japanese Youth Association. His organizations gave strong support to the revolutionary army. In his capacity as the headman of "ten households" he had frequently collected valuable military information and sent it to us. When he came to visit us with aid goods, I met him at the Heixiazigou Secret Camp.

When the "Hyesan incident"[3] broke out, he evacuated the revolutionary masses to a safety zone and led the young people of the village to my unit to join us. Although he was a new soldier, we appointed him company propagandist. He acquitted himself well as the company propagandist. Comrade Jon Mun Sop was probably much influenced by him.

Kang always participated in seminars with great enthusiasm and wrote many articles for army publications. One of his articles in *Jongsori* was very impressive: it exposed the atrocities committed by the Japanese imperialists in Changbai after provoking the "Hyesan incident". The article described the author's own experiences very vividly.

During training at Matanggou I once sent Kang to Huadian County on a mission to establish contact with the 4th Division. It was more than 120 kilometres from Matanggou to Huadian County and the route was under enemy surveillance. Hearing that I was anxious for news of the 4th Division, Kang had volunteered for the mission and performed it in good faith. He brought back a lot of information about the enemy and I was moved by his loyalty and courage.

When attacking Jingantun, he destroyed the enemy gun emplacement

with a grenade and opened a path for the attacking formation behind him. After destroying the gun emplacement, he went on a blocking mission and got serious frostbite in his feet. When we got back to the secret camp, we got him to receive treatment.

Although he was ill from the frostbite, he did not want to lie in bed, and while under treatment gave lectures, taught his men how to read and write and wrote several articles. He literally was an indefatigable man. When the enemy came in to attack the secret camp, he took up his gun and took to the field without hesitation. An enemy bullet caught him in the abdomen and he died of the consequences of this wound. I mourned bitterly over his death.

Kang Ton's heroic career shows that a man who studies sincerely can be exemplary in revolutionary practice and perform distinguished services that will live for ever in the memory of the country and his people. As far as I remember, guerrilla heroes, without exception, regarded studying as highly important. No hero worthy of the name was ever produced from among those who neglected to study. People who imbibe a wealth of mental nourishment will perform great exploits no matter what they do and no matter what the circumstances. According to officers of the Ministry of the People's Armed Forces, Hero Ri Su Bok also worked hard in his school days.

I have never seen a man of strong faith emerge from among people who have no enthusiasm for studying, nor have I seen a man of intense loyalty to revolutionary obligation come from among those who are weak in their convictions. Unremitting study gives a man a strong faith in his cause and inspires him with great enthusiasm for the revolution.

Comrade Kim Jong Il said that a man sees, hears, feels and absorbs as much as he can understand. This is an aphorism with profound meaning.

During the training period, we also worked hard to raise the men's cultural level. We taught them many revolutionary songs, frequently had amusing get-togethers and held seminars in which they could express their opinions on the books they had read, or where revolutionary stories, novels and biographies could be disseminated. Some form of entertainment took place almost every day in the secret camp. As a result of all this, our soldiers

lived and fought with optimism.

According to my experience in life, a song is the symbol of revolutionary optimism and victory. As I often say, human lives need poetry, song and dance. What pleasure would there be in living without them?

Our songs reverberated across the camp, on improvised stages, as well as over the battlefield. Loud singing means a high morale, and a high-spirited army knows no defeat. Loud songs make the revolutionary ranks optimistic and strong. Where the singing is hearty, victory in the revolution is assured.

In those days we paid special attention to order in the daily routine. Just as we cannot expect to see a sound mind in a sloven, so we cannot hope for steel-strong combat power from disorderly ranks. In those days even the sight of our camping sites or the sites of our camp fire often caused the enemy to abandon the idea of pursuing us, for they could measure the discipline, order and combat power of our units.

After we arrived at the Matanggou Secret Camp, however, some of the companies became too relaxed and began to live in a careless manner. They did not even cut firewood in advance, but cut trees at random near the camp only when it was mealtime.

I made up my mind to set an example for the whole unit to follow, and summoned O Jung Hup. The 4th Company of the 7th Regiment under his command was the pivotal unit, the strongest of all the companies. I told him about the various shortcomings in the life of this camp. He accepted my words as criticism of his unit. Back at the company, he raised a storm of improvements in the daily routine, and the company took on a completely new appearance. Three days after he came to see me again and said he had made some efforts to improve the company. He invited me to come and take a look.

The following day I and our military and political cadres inspected the 4th Company. We could see that it had completely changed. Their camp and its surroundings were so clean and shipshape that nothing remained to be desired. They had chopped smokeless dead trees and made a large pile of firewood in front of the kitchen, more than enough to last several months.

I told O Jung Hup to inspect the men's weapons. He called the company

to line up and first got his own weapon inspected by the first platoon leader. Confirming that it was a pass, he began examining the men's rifles.

I made sure that all the visiting officers joined him in the inspection of the company weapons, the state of the uniforms, barracks, kitchen, and the ablutions area. After the inspection, I told them to point out any shortcomings they had found. They unanimously agreed that the mark was an A.

The example set by the 4th Company was immediately followed by the other companies, so that an innovation took place in unit management and in the daily routine.

The talk of the daily routine at Matanggou reminds me of the no-smoking campaign that took place in the camp at that time. That was the second of its kind in our main-force unit. The first campaign, which took place when we were fighting around the foot of Mt. Paektu, had been suggested by me and masterminded by Ri Tu Su, but the second campaign was organized and developed by the smokers of their own accord.

The general objective of the intensive military and political training at the Matanggou Secret Camp was to educate all our officers and men to be communist fighters qualified to carry out the Korean revolution. The basic aim of education and edification in any society is to train people to serve the given social system in good faith. Having occupied our country, the Japanese gave a semblance of education to Korean children and young people for the purpose of taming them just enough to get them to work as slaves. That was why they refused to give Koreans higher education. They considered that a minimum of practical skills was enough for slaves.

Although there is a saying that science knows no national boundaries, it can be beneficial or harmful, depending on whom it benefits and how it is applied.

If knowledge is to be beneficial to people and humanity, education must produce true people who are well prepared ideologically, mentally, morally, technologically and culturally. This requires good ideological and moral training. Love for humanity, one's compatriots and one's country does not fall from the sky. It grows on the basis of sound ideology and conviction. I have never known immoral people to love humanity, their fellow people or

their country.

What distinguishes socialism in our country clearly from socialism in other countries is that our Party and state give priority to people's ideological education over material-centred economic construction and train true people who have acquired not only good technical and practical qualifications but also fine mental and moral qualities. We put a higher value on human beings than on material wealth, so we regard the growing number of fine people in our country as the most precious national wealth.

Military and political training at the Matanggou Secret Camp was also a process of human transformation aimed at producing people with the qualities and qualifications of true communist revolutionaries.

On our way back to the secret camp from the attack on Jingantun, a recruit lost a weapon, which happened to be Kang Ton's rifle. When Kang was taken to the secret camp because of the frostbite he had got during his blocking mission, he handed over his rifle to the care of Ju Jae Il, the company political instructor. As the unit withdrew from the battlefield, a recruit who had not yet received a weapon volunteered to help the political instructor by carrying Kang Ton's rifle. The political instructor handed over the weapon to him as requested.

When the unit was already far away from Jingantun, Ju Jae Il noticed to his surprise that the kind-hearted recruit no longer had a rifle on his shoulder. The fact was that the man had placed the rifle on the ground during a break in the march and had forgotten to pick it up when the march resumed. The political instructor and the recruit retraced the march route many miles, groping in the dark for three hours, but in vain.

Back at the secret camp, the political instructor reported the accident to me and suggested that the recruit be punished. Severe punishment in such a case was a rule of discipline in the revolutionary army.

When I asked if he had had any thoughts on what would be a proper penalty for the man, Ju Jae Il said he had none. I told him to go back to his quarters and give some careful consideration as to what kind of penalty would be most appropriate. The carelessness of the recruit who had lost the

weapon was a serious mistake, but I found it more serious that the political instructor was so rash and irresponsible as to have put the weapon in the hands of the recruit in the first place without at least cautioning him.

Ju Jae Il was an experienced soldier and knew how to carry out his duties with prudence. I really regretted that he, who was always so careful in dealing with everything and had a high sense of responsibility, had made such a mistake. I wanted to give him time to think over the case in hopes that he might use the opportunity to reflect upon himself deeply.

The next morning Ju Jae Il came to me and said that he himself, not the recruit, should be punished because it was his own carelessness and irresponsibility that had caused the accident. He realized his mistake clearly and criticized himself honestly.

For the purpose of giving a lesson to other commanding officers, I called a meeting and brought up Ju Jae Il's case.

The meeting decided to dismiss him from the post of political instructor of the 1st Company of the 8th Regiment and reappoint him as an assistant to the secretariat.

The recruits were deeply moved at the news of the meeting. Seeing that the officer was being held responsible and punished for the loss of the weapon, not the recruit himself, they keenly felt the noble moral basis on which the relationship between officers and men of the revolutionary army rested.

The recruit who had lost the weapon went to Ju Jae Il and apologized to him in tears.

Ju Jae Il criticized himself again before the man.

He said that he had been demoted for his own mistake, not because of the man, and that he was the root cause of the accident. Although it was the recruit who had lost the weapon, he, as a political worker, had failed to help him properly. He confessed that he was ashamed to even meet the recruit, for he had intended to shift the blame for the accident on him. At his new post in the secretariat, Ju worked in good faith.

On the closing day of military and political training, I removed his penalty and reappointed him political instructor of the Guard Company. Kim

Ju Hyon, who had been dismissed from the job of logistical officer of Headquarters, was also reappointed regimental commander about the same time, for he had improved himself ideologically and studied hard.

As you can see, training at Matanggou was very effective in improving the political and military qualifications and mental and moral qualities of every soldier and each officer.

Following the battles of Liukesong and Jiaxinzi, we had also about 40 days of military and political training at Baishitan.

This training was necessary mainly for the more than 200 lumbermen who had joined the revolutionary army in a group at Liukesong and Jiaxinzi. Without giving them training, it would have been impossible to proceed to our next stage of action.

There were many illiterates among the recruits. They were firmly resolved to fight for the revolution, but their ideological level in general was low. Many of them did not understand why the working class should be the leading class in our country since it was the peasantry that made up the overwhelming majority of the population.

Lumberman Son Jong Jun was also an illiterate. Originally he had been a peasant in Antu. He had first awakened to class consciousness under the influence of our attack on Hanconggou. It was not very far from Antu to Hanconggou, and the battle was said to have influenced the people in Antu a great deal.

Although he was a lumberman before his enlistment, he was thinking in the initial days of our training at Baishitan that the peasantry should be the leading class in the revolution because peasants far outnumbered workers.

Most of the recruits did not know how to handle a rifle, nor had they any idea on how to drill. The People's Revolutionary Army had a dozen kinds of small arms. It had Japanese, German and Czech machine-guns, in addition to various types of rifles, and more than four kinds of pistols. A guerrilla needed to master the use of all these weapons.

In one battle we captured several machine-guns from the Japanese. Some of these machine-guns had magazines fixed on the top of their chambers, and

some of them had the magazines fixed sideways. The former was simple to handle, but the method of shooting the latter was very sophisticated. We took a Japanese soldier prisoner and told him to explain how to work the machine-gun, but he refused. We then found out he was an opium addict who would probably reveal any secret whatsoever when given opium–so we gave him opium and got the secret of the machine-gun out of him.

I made a manual for the operation and care of the machine-gun and taught it to the men.

We had to go through so much trouble just to learn how to fire a single machine-gun and how to take it apart and reassemble it, so how could we expect the former lumbermen to be qualified guerrillas without giving them military and political training? We got O Paek Ryong to harass the enemy by luring them away to different places and then throw them off about 200 kilometres from Baishitan. We sent small units to fetch the supplies and weapons we had hidden at various locales before we started training at the secret camp. Hearing the news that we had recruited hundreds of new men, Choe Hyon sent us dozens of weapons.

Training at Baishitan was given in two stages in anticipation of possible changes in the situation. The first stage was to teach the basic subjects quickly, and the second stage was to repeat the same subjects so as to consolidate what had been learned the first time.

For the veterans we set the objective of raising the level of their knowledge at least by one grade and of helping the recruits in their training. For the recruits the objective was to learn how to read and write and master different types of weapons in a one-month period. Competitions in reaching the objectives were organized between regiments, companies and individual soldiers. When beginning military and political training at Baishitan, we gave the slogan “The more difficult and complex the situation, the harder must we study!” in addition to “Studying is also a battle!”

Every single recruit became literate during this training period. To test their new abilities, we got them to write to their parents and siblings at home. Each of them was able to express his thoughts and feelings freely in the

Korean language. They also mastered the methods of handling, disassembling and reassembling different types of rifles, pistols and machine-guns. Some of the recruits even wrote articles for army publications.

Throughout that winter, in fact, the veterans and recruits all contributed to periodicals.

On the day of reviewing the first training period, we had a grand citation ceremony with entertainment. Those who had been the best students were awarded quality watches, gold rings and fountain-pens.

In that winter we frequently ate ground, boiled soy beans at Baishitan. There was a place called Dapuchaihe near the secret camp, and not far from the place was an unharvested soy-bean field. By the agency of the local peasants, we bought the field and reaped the bean crop. All the comrades suggested grinding and boiling the beans.

There was a family living in the Baishitan Secret Camp area, driven away by the enemy's "punitive" attack. I stayed in their house, and they gave me some ground soy beans mixed with dried and frozen cabbage leaves that had been chopped. I made balls the size of my fist out of this, then froze the balls and boiled one for each meal. I ate this at every meal, every day, yet I never got tired of eating it. In order to economize our rations, I ate maize a little at a time and found it truly delicious.

The military and political training at Baishitan proved to be a great help in the subsequent battles at Hongqihe and at Damalugou. It was also invaluable in our fighting and political activities in the closing period of large-unit circling operations and in small-unit actions.

In subsequent years I instituted the motto, "Knowledge gives us foresight into the future," and I have constantly emphasized the importance of learning so as to encourage our officials to keep on improving their political and practical qualifications.

Today, under the revolutionary slogan "The entire Party must study!", proposed by Comrade Kim Jong Il, everyone in the country has acquired the revolutionary habit of learning while working and working while studying.

2. The Weasel Hunter

While we were carrying out military and political training at the Matanggou Secret Camp, the enemy made every attempt to trace the whereabouts of the Headquarters of the Korean People's Revolutionary Army. Sensing, though belatedly, that the main force of the revolutionary army had left the Mt. Paektu area for Mengjiang, the intelligence services of the Japanese imperialists hatched all sorts of plots to destroy the leadership of the Korean revolution.

Here is a lesson we learned at that time.

On returning from his small-unit action one day, Kim Ju Hyon said he had met an old man who had once been involved in the Independence Army[4] and was now earning his living hunting weasels in Mengjiang. He added that he had talked to the old fellow to turn him round and had found him to be a good man.

I took an interest in this old weasel hunter. His Independence-Army background attracted my attention before all else. It was just after the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War, a time when weak-kneed people were generally abandoning the revolutionary cause and hiding in their quiet parlours or in back streets, scared at the news that the Japanese had occupied Beijing and Shanghai while advancing into the Chinese mainland. Craving for the sight of even a single patriot, we used to shake hands in delight with anyone who said he'd had anything to do with the independence movement in the past.

Kim Ju Hyon's meeting the old man from the Independence Army gave me a particular hope of finding out the whereabouts of Sim Ryong Jun with the old man's help. Sim Ryong Jun had been an important figure in *Chamui-bu* when the three organizations of the Independence Army–*Jongui-bu*, *Sinmin-bu* and *Chamui-bu*–were scrambling for power in Manchuria. In his

Chamui-bu days he worked in Huinan, Huadian, Mengjiang and in the surrounding areas, and after the merger of the three organizations into *Kukmin-bu* it was rumoured that he was living somewhere in Mengjiang.

I knew Sim Ryong Jun because he had been a close acquaintance of my father's. In my middle school days I often saw him at the Fuxingtai Rice Mill in Shangyi Street, Jilin, and at the Sanfeng Inn in the same city. In those days the independence campaigners and leaders of the Independence Army sought the unification of the three organizations, with the aim of rallying the forces of different parties and factions and various sections of the population behind them by ending the disorderly existence of such disparate groupings as three-man parties, five-man factions, eight leagues and nine associations. Jilin was their central venue. Sim Ryong Jun had represented *Chamui-bu* at the meeting to unify the three organizations.

I told Kim Ju Hyon to find out more about the weasel hunter and to ask the hunter if he knew Sim Ryong Jun, and if so, where Sim was living.

Kim Ju Hyon left the secret camp to meet the hunter. On his return he said that the old man still preserved his patriotic frame of mind even though he had left the independence movement, and that he knew where Sim Ryong Jun was living and how he was getting along.

According to the hunter, after Sim's retirement from the Independence Army he had married and was living in Mengjiang. The hunter assured that Sim was still patriotic and had not changed his mind.

Hearing Kim Ju Hyon's report, I thought that if Sim, though old, still remained true to the cause he had taken up, I might be able to establish a link with him and extend the ARF organization to Mengjiang. I believed that in spite of the difference of his principles and doctrines from ours, he would certainly join us in the united front because he was still a patriot.

There was another reason we regarded Sim as important and tried hard to get in touch with him.

Seeing that the Japanese army was sinking ever-deeper into the mire of the Sino-Japanese War, we strengthened the common front with the Chinese anti-Japanese forces on the one hand, and on the other made unremitting

efforts to form a united front with the anti-Japanese forces connected with the Korean Provisional Government in Shanghai. The idea of joining hands with the anti-Japanese forces, which had ties with the provisional government, required people capable of linking us with the provisional government. Sim Ryong Jun was the right man for this task.

Sim had been a part of the Korean Provisional Government in Shanghai in that *Chamui-bu*, to which he belonged, was under the direct control of the provisional government in the capacity of its Manchurian Army Headquarters. Many of the cadres of *Chamui-bu* were appointed directly by the provisional government.

The great leader said that the people who had gone to China proper after their service with Sim Ryong Jun in the Independence Army would be connected with the provisional government one way or the other and would have shared feelings with the Kuomintang of China.

At that time Wang De-lin's special envoy was already staying with our unit. We had given him the job of Guard-Company instructor, although the job was not crucial to the company.

My men used to address him as Instructor Li. He was good at Chinese chess, so I often played with him.

After the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War, Wang De-lin, as commander of the Detached 2nd Route Army under the Revolutionary Military Committee, was linked directly with Jiang Jie-shi, who had secret contacts with the provisional government. In these circumstances, linking up with Wang De-lin meant a full possibility of our opening a route to cooperation with the provisional government. The arrival of Wang De-lin's special envoy from China proper had been an unexpected stroke of fortune for us.

According to Instructor Li, Wang De-lin, who was close to 60, was still fighting against the Japanese on the front lines. Chen Han-zhang, too, told me how Wang De-lin had been doing.

Chen Han-zhang said that he had met Wang De-lin when he went to Tianjin on Wu Yi-cheng's orders as his subordinate in the National Salvation Army. At that time Wang De-lin told Chen Han-zhang that he had left

Northeast China for China proper in order to be able to fight against the Japanese on a larger scale with the help of Jiang Jie-shi and Zhang Xue-liang. At that time Chen Han-zhang had probably informed Wang De-lin in detail of the armed struggle of the Korean communists.

In order to establish contact with Sim Ryong Jun it was necessary to test the weasel hunter further. We gave him several assignments and he carried out each of them in good faith. Through these tests we judged that the old man was reliable.

We now proceeded to work with Sim Ryong Jun. We began with sending a letter from me, the Ten-Point Programme and the Inaugural Declaration of the ARF to him through the hunter. On return from the errand to Sim, the hunter said that Sim had looked strangely absent-minded after reading my letter. When asked if there wasn't any other reaction, the hunter answered that Sim had said he would reply very soon.

Having received this report from Kim Ju Hyon, I could not help wondering about Sim Ryong Jun. His absent-minded attitude to my letter fell a little short of my expectations. I had expected from him a strong response to the letter, even though he might not be able to pay a personal visit to the secret camp. It seemed that he had been a little too cool towards my letter. He might have been embarrassed by our appeal for him to come back to the anti-Japanese front, being a man who had buried himself in family life after fighting, arms in hand, for the restoration of national sovereignty. The appeal meant his renewed commitment to the independence movement, and in this context it could be regarded as natural that a man who had abandoned his cause should think matters through when confronted with our proposal.

A man who had given up the revolutionary cause half way might hesitate in making his decision to resume the abandoned cause. I thought that he must have some reason such as this for delaying his reply to the letter.

It was beyond our understanding, however, that he had expressed no opinion on the Ten-Point Programme and Inaugural Declaration of the ARF.

Anyway, there was no other choice but to wait for his reply. His answer would give us an idea of his present mental state and what measures we

should take of it.

A few days later a small unit that had been to Mengjiang brought Sim's reply via the weasel hunter. He began his letter with a brief greeting of consolation for our hardships in the mountains, and then went on to say that he was relieved to know that I, Kim Hyong Jik's son, was fighting for the country and nation in command of a large army. He also said that our line of armed struggle against the Japanese was absolutely just. Confessing that he felt remorse for his abandonment of the independence movement, he concluded that, encouraged by my letter, he had decided to resume the independence movement and was expecting much help from us.

How glad I was to get this reply! In age, Sim Ryong Jun belonged to my father's generation, and by 1937 many of his contemporaries were dead, had fled to foreign lands or were in gaol. Some of them had retired from the fighting ranks to become lumbermen, peasants or shopkeepers. I knew many of the renowned independence fighters, but they had already disappeared from Jilin by the end of the 1920s and the beginning of the 1930s. A considerable number of them had moved the theatre of their activities to China proper. The Reverend Son Jong Do was probably the last acquaintance of my father's I met in Jilin before I started off on my armed struggle.

After I moved to Jiandao to carry out this struggle, I never again saw any of the leaders of the three organizations whom I had often met in my days in Fusong and Jilin. But wherever I was, I never forgot them. Whenever I recollected my dead father, I saw in my mind's eye the faces of the patriots who used to talk with him with such great anxiety about life and the suffering nation. There was no knowing, however, where all these patriots were now.

How delighted I was at that moment to have discovered Sim Ryong Jun in Mengjiang, to have got in touch with him and to have even received a letter from him telling me of his decision to make a fresh start!

Around that time we were laying down the policy of extending the organizational network of the ARF over many areas and discussing in earnest how we should carry it out. Some of our discussions were published in the

army paper.

Extending the ARF organization to the Mengjiang area meant increasing the strength and influence of the Mt. Paektu Base over the area, and on the basis of this, strengthening our revolutionary force in many directions.

Through the weasel hunter we sent some money to Sim Ryong Jun to buy us newspapers such as *Dong-A Ilbo* and *Joson Ilbo* and some periodicals. Sim bought all the newspapers and magazines we had asked and sent them to us in a few days.

Letters, money and articles were exchanged between Sim and us on a number of occasions.

Having worked with Sim for several months in this manner, we thought of drawing him into the underground organizational activity as soon as possible. The Party committee at Headquarters held a meeting and discussed working with Sim Ryong Jun in a bigger way and forming ARF and other revolutionary organizations widely in the Mengjiang area with his help.

At the meeting I suggested that we might entrust him with a task–tell him to form an organization of the ARF in Mengjiang or ask him to obtain drugs needed for the treatment of the wounded–and that these would not only be the final tests for him, but at the same time also give him a good opportunity to restore his political integrity. The meeting agreed to my proposal.

At the meeting we also discussed whom to send as the political operative to work in the capacity of Sim's adviser. Although he had held an important post at *Chamui-bu*, Sim had no experience in building organizations, except, perhaps, for his participation in the merger of the three organizations. With only this experience he would be unable to cope with the task of building clandestine organizations. We decided to send along an able political worker who would help him behind the scenes. Comrade Kim Il, an experienced political worker, was chosen as the right man.

Sim Ryong Jun, too, requested a man to help him. Addressing me as General Kim, he said he intended to form an ARF organization immediately in compliance with my request, but that he did not know how to do it. So he also requested an interview with me.

I considered his two requests in a favourable light.

However, all the staff of Headquarters objected to the idea of my paying a visit to Mengjiang. They said it would be too risky. Nevertheless, it was improper to ask a man twice my age to walk all the way to the secret camp.

To hold the interview with Sim Ryong Jun it was necessary to select a place that was neither in the town of Mengjiang nor in the secret camp. We sent out a detachment on a mission to select an appropriate place. I intended to send Kim Il to the rendezvous for a talk with Sim once the choice for a place had been made.

Having planned the operation up to this point, I ordered Kim Ju Hyon's small unit to bring the weasel hunter over to the secret camp.

Anyone coming to the secret camp of Headquarters from the Toudao-Songhua River had to pass through many places. Walking along the frozen river, then climbing up a crag, he had to pass through the secret camps of the 7th Regiment, 8th Regiment and the Guard Company in the order named before he finally got to Headquarters. This was the only route for anyone coming to Headquarters. Keeping to this route was a strict discipline established by all at Headquarters for the sake of secrecy.

Soldiers moving to and from the secret camp found it best to walk on the ice along the river valley because this way they left no footprints. Even if footprints were made, there was no need to worry about them, for the wind would sweep the snow off the icy surface of the river. When there was no wind, the men just scuffed the snow with their feet and then walked on the packed snow. This did not leave any traces of walking. It was one way of winter marching we had discovered. We applied this method when moving into the Matanggou Secret Camp and the Baishitan Secret Camp.

I seem to recall that we moved to Matanggou from Qingjiangdianzi, Mengjiang County, at the time of the first snowfall that winter. When we came near the crag not far from the secret camp, we could see water gushing up from the middle of the thick icy surface of the river. Some of my men thought there might be a hot spring in the middle of the Toudao-Songhua River.

The crag at the gateway to Matanggou was very steep, almost per-

pendicular. All my unit had great difficulty in climbing it. The men toiled up inch by inch, sweating and gripping at bent tree branches and dry grass roots.

It was really strange to see the gushing spring of water from the ice surface of the river on a wintry day so cold that our eyelashes grew white with frost. The Toudao-Songhua is a truly strange river.

The old weasel hunter, too, came to Matanggou by this secret route. Passing by the guard post of the 7th Regiment's secret camp under the escort of the small unit, the hunter happened to hear one of the sentries make the following joking comment: "These days only spies come to the secret camp under escort. This old man looks really suspicious. If he's a spy, I'll have to shoot him." The hunter was terrified by the remark.

That winter no civilians, except for criminals needing to be examined and disposed of, were admitted to the secret camp. If there was anyone we needed to deal with, we ourselves went out to meet him. Hence the sentries, who were accustomed to this practice, took the hunter for a spy. The present sentry had uttered the joke without hesitation because he had mistaken the old man for a Chinese, for he was dressed as a Chinese. I don't know why he didn't wear Korean clothes. This led the sentry to see the hunter as a Chinese and say such a thing in his hearing.

Now then: if the weasel hunter had been innocent, the joke would have had no effect on him. But the old man was scared because he thought the guerrillas were aware of his true identity. When we were preparing for the interview with Sim Ryong Jun, the old hunter had been given a mission by the Japanese under threat and intimidation to harm our Headquarters. When he came to the secret camp, escorted by the small unit, he was carrying with him a weapon to kill me. Naturally he felt ill at ease after hearing the joke.

When the hunter arrived, I was playing chess with Wang De-lin's special envoy.

Leaving the chess game, I met him and found his expression somehow clouded and tense.

As he confessed later, the remark by the sentry had given him the feeling that General Kim Il Sung, who had been known to anticipate events three

months ahead, probably knew their plot, and that his being dragged to such a place meant that he was as good as dead. It was natural that he, who had been inveigled into me plot against his will, felt uneasy at the words of the sentry.

Seeing that the old man did not look well, we sympathized with him. What hardships he must have been suffering, we thought, to make a living by hunting weasels in the deep mountains of Mengjiang, having lost his country to the Japanese. We therefore treated him with warm hospitality. While feeding my own men with boiled sorghum, I saw to it that he was given *panicum* (glutinous millet–Tr.). He was taken to look around the unit and to see how amusing get-togethers, public lectures and seminars were being given. I intended, after such initiation and enlightenment, to send him to the place where Kim Il and Sim Ryong Jun were to meet.

We tried to influence the hunter as much as possible in various ways, but our efforts did not have much effect on him. According to the guardsmen he would sigh, unable to eat the dish of millet, and only asked when he was going to be sent out.

We did not send the hunter and Kim Il to the venue of the talk immediately for the sole reason that we knew Matanggou and its vicinity had been surrounded by the enemy. We had posted watch teams on hills and in trees to observe happenings closely through field glasses. The watch teams had instantly detected smoke coiling up from the nearby mountains and enemy groups assembled in different places. We ourselves refrained from raising smoke during daylight, but made sure that our meals were cooked at night by making small fires.

One day I called the old man to my Headquarters to talk to him. When we were talking, a detachment returned from their operation and came to me to report the result. The small-unit leader gave a brief account of their actions and then said that on their way back they had captured two spies. He said he had released one after giving him some good advice because the spy confessed honestly, and disposed of the other because he had owned up to nothing about his mission and resisted in spite of undeniable evidence.

After hearing out the report of the small-unit leader, I commented that he

had acted correctly in both cases.

The moment I finished speaking, the old man suddenly kowtowed and pleaded, “General, please forgive me for my crimes!” Not knowing what this was all about, the small-unit leader and I just looked at the old man. I surmised there must be some reason for his plead, but could not see what it was.

I told the old man to explain himself without making a fuss.

Apparently he was encouraged by my mild tone, for he told us to wait a minute and went out, then came back with a hatchet he had hidden under a birch tree. At this point he confessed to having committed two crimes. He said his first crime was that he had been given a mission by the Japanese to harm Headquarters and that he had hidden the hatchet instead of repenting and confessing while being accorded the hospitality of a distinguished guest at the secret camp. The second crime, he said, was that although he was aware of Sim Ryong Jun’s betrayal, he had not informed us of the fact.

The news of Sim’s treachery left me aghast. That the weasel hunter had been given a mission by the Japanese was not very surprising. It was nothing new, and we had experienced similar cases when we were at the Mt. Paektu Secret Camp. But the betrayal of Sim Ryong Jun, once a bigwig of Chamui-bu, in becoming a stooge of the Japanese imperialists was deplorable.

In the years of the three organizations, Sim had enjoyed a great reputation and the people had expected much from him. He had made a lot of touching speeches to stir up the people against the Japanese. What a shame for such a man to have degenerated into a Japanese dog! I asked the hunter how he found out that Sim was a turncoat.

He said he had heard Sim hatching the plot with the Japanese. I asked him what their scheme was, and he answered that they had been conspiring on how to lure me out of my Headquarters. Their plan was to detain the representative of the guerrilla army when he came to meet Sim, force him to write to his Headquarters for a rendezvous with the Commander, and to surround and capture the Commander when he appeared at the agreed place.

According to the hunter’s confession, all the letters Sim had sent me were written after discussion with a Japanese in a back parlour. Whenever we had

given him an assignment, he met the Japanese to inform him of the content of the message. He then acted according to the instructions of the Japanese.

The hunter also said that after his surrender to the Japanese, Sim had gone to Changchun several times to bring the enemy's "punitive" force.

It was fortunate that the weasel hunter had made his confession before it was too late. Had he not confessed, Kim Il and I and every one of us would have been killed.

Trusting people sometimes accompanies such hair-raising crises. However, I managed to avoid disaster, and this, too, was because of my trust in people, if I may say so. Because I had welcomed the old man with an open heart and shown him various aspects of the routine of our unit without hiding anything from him, his stained heart regained the purity of his human conscience. Human psychology is, indeed, strange.

Comrade Kim Jong Il said, "Trust produces loyalty, mistrust leads to betrayal." That is a golden saying.

Distrust earns you nothing, while trust will earn you a great deal.

This does not mean, however, that you should give your heart to simply anyone without distinguishing between friend and foe. You should trust people, but you must also test them through practice.

My comrades said that the old man should not be forgiven in spite of all the information he had given us, but I forgave him all the same. Why should we not bestow leniency on a person who honestly repents of his or her guilt? The record of such an honest man must not be questioned.

Sim's case taught me the serious lesson that entertaining illusions about people is a taboo. We must reject false images of others, particularly at times when the revolution is undergoing a crisis. Confidence in people and love for them are good, but approaching people with illusions is not good. Ideology is not immutable. A man's mind today may differ from what it was yesterday and from what it will be tomorrow. Sim Ryong Jun's case proves this.

Depending on one's interests, one may give an impetus to the revolution or stand in its way. The ideology of a man who fights by placing the interests of his fellow people above everything else will remain as immutable as a

diamond, whereas a man who seeks only personal safety and comfort, disregarding the interests of the revolution and his fellows, will soon degenerate ideologically. It is the people who have been poisoned with individualism and selfishness that betray the revolution most easily in times of difficulty.

Through the example of Sim Ryong Jun I clearly realized what an abyss of treachery a man might fall into if he forgets his original self and hems himself in behind a wall of self-protection. He who lives only for himself unhesitatingly sells out his friends, his comrades, his neighbours, his nation and his country.

3. The Last of the Independence Army Forces

The Independence Army raised the flag of armed struggle at a stage of Korean history when the country was mourning over the loss of its sovereignty. It was the product of a burning desire for independence on the part of patriots who fought desperately to win back their lost national sovereignty through a volunteer-army struggle, through a patriotic cultural enlightenment movement and through various other forms of struggle, legal and illegal, armed and unarmed. Though in decline because it was lagging behind the times and lacking a strong mass foundation, the Independence Army was the only anti-Japanese armed force that represented the nationalist movement.

Highly appreciating the fact that the Independence Army wanted to destroy Japanese imperialism by force of arms rather than petitioning or begging for independence, the great leader extended his efforts to work with them from the very first days of raising the torch of the anti-Japanese revolution.

It was while the great leader was paying a visit to Commander Ryang in southern Manchuria that he first developed a strong wish to fight in the forefront of resistance against the Japanese, shoulder to shoulder with the Independence Army. This noble and patriotic desire was to bear fruit several years later.

Choe Chun Guk and Choe Yun Gu, in support of the great leader's line of cooperation with the Independence Army, played an important role in paving this army's way to converting from anti-communism to pro-communism and in leading them to come over to the side of the Korean People's Revolutionary Army in a just cause.

What kind of a man was Choe Yun Gu?

On a visit to the Revolutionary Martyrs Cemetery on Mt. Taesong in October 1975, the respected leader paused for a long time in front of Choe Yun Gu's bust and talked a great deal about him in recollection. Choe Yun Gu's personality and how he changed his outlook thus became known to the public in greater detail.

The following is a systematic selection of what the leader said on that occasion about Choe

Yun Gu to the officials of the Party History Institute and those of the Revolutionary Martyrs Cemetery, as well as statements he made on other occasions to historians of the anti-Japanese revolution, to writers and to those in charge of various revolutionary sites.

Choe Yun Gu was from Uiju, North Phyongan Province. Many renowned champions of independence came from the area along the Amnok River in North Phyongan Province, among them O Tong Jin, Ryang Se Bong, Jang Chol Ho, Ri Kwan Rin, Kim Si U, Choe Tong O, and Kong Yong.

When I went to Fusong in 1925, many people accompanied my father to meet me, coming out as far as Daying. One of them was Choe Yun Gu. At that time Choe Yun Gu was a man of low rank, although he became deputy commander and then commander of the Independence Army in its later years.

When I was going to primary school in Fusong the local people called him Chamsa Choe. My father and mother and his immediate superiors, Jang Chol Ho, O Tong Jin and Ryang Se Bong, also addressed him as such.

“Chamsa” indicated his military rank. After his promotion to platoon leader, I called him “Uncle Chamsa”, and even after he came over to us in command of his unit, I still addressed him as Uncle Chamsa whenever we were alone.

Choe Yun Gu, too, liked me to call him that. If I had called him Platoon Leader he might have felt uncomfortable.

He was a man of few words, although his mind was full of ideas. He was a typical soldier in that he was taciturn, thoughtful, broad-minded and a man of guts.

My father said that Choe Yun Gu had trained himself in martial arts from his boyhood on by wearing sand bags around his shins. If this is true, it shows that he must have had a great ambition even in his childhood. He must have been influenced in his childhood by the Righteous Volunteers and soldiers of the Independence Army who had frequented the area along the Amnok River.

Choe Yun Gu’s father was a smith. After attending the Confucian village school for some time, he worked, helping his father in his forge when he was

barely more than ten. One wintry day I saw him stripped to the waist and having a cold rub-down, muscles bulging all over his body like those of a martial arts champion. My father admired him, saying that to be a man one needed to be sturdy like him.

When he was seventeen or eighteen years old, Choe Yun Gu joined the Independence Army and went to Maoershan, Linjiang County, the base of the Paeksan Armed Group[5].

One day, talking with my father about Choe Yun Gu, old man O Tong Jin commented that Choe was the stuff generals were made of. His words made a strong impression on me. Choe was worthy of such praise not only for his strong build but for his manly qualities and character as well. He went through many battles. According to Kim Myong Jun, who had been Choe's subordinate in his days in the Independence Army, Choe used to fight at the forefront in battles even after he became deputy commander. To be candid, in my days at Fusong I respected him as a very important person in the independence movement.

My father loved him as if he were his own brother.

When my father was ill, Choe Yun Gu in company with Jang Chol Ho came to ask about him almost every day. When my father died, he brought all his men to the funeral and mourned over the loss. He wore hempen headgear, as a mourner would do, and cried bitterly. At that time he consoled me warmly and with many encouraging words. Still now I feel grateful to him for his sympathy.

I don't know much about his principles or doctrines when he belonged to *Jongui-bu*. If I were to judge his ideas by using his attitude towards communism as a criterion, I should say that he was more pro-communist than anti-communist. But he did not convert himself to the communist movement as early as Kong Yong or Pak Jin Yong did.

Among my father's companions there were many people who espoused new ideological trends, but few of them changed their direction to come over to the communist camp.

In those years the people who adopted the new ideological trend of

communism in southern and central Manchuria were surrounded by nationalists. If advocates of communism had been in the majority in these areas, we would not have suffered terrorism at the hands of the reactionary upper-crust that made up the *Kukmin-bu* when we visited Wangqingmen.

By contrast, in eastern Manchuria, communist ideology prevailed over nationalism. As soon as it appeared, communism swept over the whole region and became predominant before nationalism could come out against it. There was none of the acute confrontation between the two ideological trends in eastern Manchuria as in southern and central Manchuria.

As was the case with Choe Hyon, Yun Chang Bom, Pak Tong Gun, Kim Il Ryong, and Pak Tu Gyong, many soldiers of the Independence Army had no qualms about joining the revolutionary army, organized and led by communists in eastern Manchuria. There the switch from the old to the new ideological trend took place without bloodshed and with no desperate ideological war. The masses in this part of Manchuria accepted the spreading communist ideology as the guiding ideology of their class and viewed the switchover of the Korean national liberation struggle from the nationalist to communist movement as a natural process that accorded with the law of historical development.

In the summer of 1932 I met Choe Yun Gu at Tonghua, but did not have a long interview with him because I had to negotiate with Ryang Se Bong over plans for cooperation.

When we were negotiating with Ryang Se Bong in southern Manchuria, the anti-communist trend was still dominant over the pro-communist trend in the ideological climate of the Independence Army. When we left Tonghua after the failure in the negotiations for cooperation–a failure that was due to the anti-communism of the high-ranking officers of the Independence Army and the enemy's machination to drive a wedge between the two negotiating parties–Choe Yun Gu was reportedly very sad.

Although we returned from southern Manchuria without tangible results, we did not abandon the idea of cooperation with the independence campaigners. A united front with the nationalists was not a matter so simple

as to allow us to remain indifferent over its success or failure, nor was it something to be picked up when we were weak and discarded when we were strong, or to be maintained only during the struggle to gain political power and to be ignored after success in the struggle. It was a lasting strategic line we had to maintain for complete national harmony and unity.

Comrades, just think: Haven't we continued to emphasize the united front with nationalists all through the many decades since the country was liberated? It is absolutely correct that since the early years of our revolutionary activities we have looked upon the line of a national united front as a lasting strategic line that should be maintained consistently for great national unity.

In spite of the failure in the negotiations with Ryang Se Bong, we did not doubt that alliance with the Independence Army would be realized some day, and we made every effort with great enthusiasm to hasten the arrival of that day. We had achieved a common front with conservative Chinese anti-Japanese forces, and there was no reason why we should be unable to succeed in establishing a joint front with our fellow countrymen. Quite honestly, to remain divided among ourselves cast shame upon us in the eyes of foreigners.

After we moved to West Jiandao on return from our second expedition to northern Manchuria, I kept myself systematically informed on the developments in the Independence Army in southern Manchuria through different channels, while continuing with my efforts to bring about cooperation with them. I sent a messenger to deliver the Inaugural Declaration and the Ten-Point Programme of the ARF to them. As a first step, I gave an assignment to work on cooperation with the Independence Army to some of the Korean comrades who were active in the Anti-Japanese Allied Army in southern Manchuria. Ri Tong Gwang worked with the Independence Army in the capacity of south Manchurian representative of the ARF.

The Independence Army, however, was dead set against cooperation. After Ryang Se Bong's death, this army came under the command of Kim Hwal Sok, a die-hard anti-communist. Of course, a considerable number of

officers and men in the army were open to the new ideological trend and wanted cooperation with the communists. However, because of the formidable right-wing force that had followed the dyed-in-the-wool anti-communists, like Ko I Ho and Hyon Muk Kwan from the years of *Kukmin-bu*, our efforts to cooperate with them made little progress. During Ryang Se Bong's lifetime, he had carried out joint actions with Yang Jing-yu's unit, but even this hard-won initial success was not developed further in the years of Kim Hwal Sok, owing to the anti-communist top hierarchy of the Independence Army.

To bring Kim Hwal Sok round to a coalition with the communists was an urgent matter that would affect the destiny of hundreds of officers and men under his command.

Frankly speaking, our reason for attaching such great importance to cooperation with the Independence Army was not because we were after some great benefit from them.

By 1936 the Korean People's Revolutionary Army had grown into a great force in terms of both numerical strength and fighting efficiency. We were prepared to fight on our own without their help.

By contrast, the Independence Army was on the decline and extremely hard up for everything. Their ranks were dwindling continuously, and they were so short of weapons that some of them had to be equipped with spears and clubs. The weakened Independence Army used to sneak away from the enemy instead of fighting, and there was no way for them to get new supplies of weapons and ammunition. Their food and clothing situation was much the same.

Kim Myong Jun, a veteran of the anti-Japanese revolution and Choe Yun Gu's mate in the Independence Army under Kim Hwal Sok's command, was later to come over to the Korean People's Revolutionary Army. In a note written in 1960, Kim Myong Jun recalled his enlistment in the Independence Army and its circumstances in subsequent years:

"In autumn 1932 we... went to an Independence Army unit which was billeted in a village near Mt. Yantong. The village was busy with preparations to welcome the soldiers. My

companion and I went to help the people butcher pigs in order to win favour from the soldiers. We also ran some errands for the sentry. But the commanding officers of the Independence Army rejected our application for enlistment because we were too young.

"That night we followed close behind the moving unit with firm determination to join the army. We gave them a helping hand with great enthusiasm wherever they stopped. A company commander was at last moved by our unremitting service and our enthusiasm for enlistment and permitted us to join his company. No word can describe our delight at the time.

"Before long, however, we were disappointed as we came to realize that the Independence Army was not the army we had dreamed of. This army, the object of our burning adoration, was so short of weapons that some of its soldiers were carrying clubs. We had expected to get rifles as soon as we joined, but we had to borrow a matchlock from our seniors whenever we went to stand sentry."

After joining the Korean People's Revolutionary Army, Kim Myong Jun was by the side of the great leader for some years at the Far Eastern training base during small-unit actions.

The great leader Comrade Kim Il Sung learned a lot from him about the various aspects of the Independence Army under the command of Kim Hwal Sok. The great leader said that the Independence Army's transition in the wake of Choe Yun Gu to the KPRA was an inevitable result of the development of the nationalist movement in our country.

The Independence Army raised money from among the people to buy weapons and also requisitioned food and clothing from the people and relied on them for their shelter. They levied an "annual tax in kind" upon the people in the areas under their control.

The tax collectors used to call in people and check their payment by household. People who failed to pay the required amount by the deadline were given a good dressing down, or were even whipped.

Just as the *Jongui-bu* did in the past, the army of the *Kukmin-bu*, too, lorded it over southern Manchuria as if it were their own independent state.

According to Kim Myong Jun, the Independence Army abandoned its original cause around the mid-1930s and gradually degenerated into bandits.

When they ran out of food supplies, one of their small units would rob the raftsmen on the Amnok River of their food. In the guise of bandits, they

would hide at a bottleneck in the river, let off a few rounds of threatening fire when the rafts approached, get them to row to the water's edge and then rob the raftsmen of their food.

What a disgrace to the Independence Army! Even a last resort should have some limits. It was truly shameful for the Independence Army to have come to this pass–an army that should have protected and helped to save the people! Discipline in this army gradually loosened as well, and deserters appeared one after another. Kim Myong Jun's platoon leader stole his commander's seal, pistol and money from the locker at headquarters and ran away with some of his men who were on duty. When encountering soldiers of the Independence Army, even mountain rebels disarmed them. The Independence Army was isolated literally from every quarter.

We did not wish to see them disintegrating without having accomplished their cause. Their collapse would only gladden the Japanese imperialists and bring us nothing good. At a time when quite a few patriots had left the independence movement or had become servants of the enemy, it was important for Korea that the Independence Army remained in existence as an armed force and pursued its original aim. As such it would have won the people's support and love. In their latter years they did nothing worth mentioning, but in the initial period and in the middle stage of their activities, they had fought many battles and had a great many successes.

In later years the commanding officers of the Independence Army had done their best to arrest its collapse, threatened as the army was by repeated "punitive" attacks by Japanese and Manchurian police and armed forces and by its own internal ideological confusion. Defeatism was the most destructive aspect of their ideological degeneration, leading to surrender to the enemy, desertion and disgraceful banditry.

Kim Hwal Sok, with other brass-hats in the army, as well as a number of other officers and men, pinned their hopes on assistance from Jiang Jie-shi's forces. Harbouring illusions about the Kuomintang, they attempted to maintain their army with its support.

Worship of the strong is nothing special. It appears when a weak person

looks up to others and seeks to live off them. It is neither innate nor does it fall from the sky. A man who disbelieves in his own strength or underestimates it may be reduced to a sycophant, no matter how great his love for his country.

As I previously mentioned, the fatal ideological limitation of the Independence Army was that they did not believe in their own or the people's strength. Disbelief in this strength would end in servility, which in turn would lead to treachery to the nation.

History clearly proves that anyone serving as a flunkey to another nation will inevitably look down upon his own country, and that a nihilistic approach to one's country invariably leads to treachery to the nation.

This does not mean, however, that all the officers and men of the Independence Army pinned their hopes on money and weapons from the Kuomintang. The man in command worshipped Jiang Jie-shi as if he were God, but a considerable number of officers did not. They were much more interested in an alliance with the Korean People's Revolutionary Army than with the Kuomintang army. The officers and men of the Independence Army came to know the KPRA through their own experience, not by hearsay.

I still remember what Kim Myong Jun told me when we were at the Far Eastern training base.

Once his small unit of the Independence Army happened to meet a detachment of the People's Revolutionary Army in a mountain village in Jian County. It was midnight and the soldiers of the Independence Army knocked at the door of a house to find shelter. But a detachment of the revolutionary army was already billeted there. Knowing that they had been seeking shelter from house to house, the revolutionary army soldiers readily offered their own shelter. Hearing that they had run out of rations, the guerrillas also shared out their own rations among them.

The Independence Army soldiers who went out to make water before dawn were surprised to find the revolutionary army soldiers sleeping in the open, huddled together around a flickering camp fire. They had neither mattresses nor blankets. They were sleeping on spread-out corn stalks. Who

would not have been moved at the scene? The following morning the soldiers of the Independence Army were even more strongly impressed as they saw the officers and men of the revolutionary army gathering up the corn stalks, fetching water, chopping firewood and sweeping the yard to help the old host and hostess. The Chinese old folk of the house were also moved by the actions of the guerrillas. They held the men's hands in theirs, saying that they had never seen such kind-hearted soldiers before, and declared that the guerrillas were truly a people's army.

Thanks to Kim Myong Jun's mates, all the officers and men of the Independence Army came to hear of this event. Choe Yun Gu was deeply moved by the anecdote as well.

Gradually it became an irresistible trend among the soldiers of the Independence Army to feel an ever-growing trust in the People's Revolutionary Army.

They came to realize that the only way to their survival was in their alliance with the People's Revolutionary Army, that cooperation with the communists was their only way out. We on the other hand wanted the Independence Army to remain strong enough to fight on their own, or join their efforts to those of the People's Revolutionary Army in the struggle against the Japanese.

Judging from the circumstances of the Independence Army, there was a full possibility of their cooperation with the People's Revolutionary Army. The problem was how to convince Commander Kim Hwal Sok and his followers, who were pinning their hopes on Jiang Jie-shi, of this. According to information sent us by our operatives and comrades active in southern Manchuria, Choe Yun Gu was fully satisfied with the Inaugural Declaration and the Ten-Point Programme of the ARF.

It was after we founded the ARF that we decided to make every effort to realize cooperation with the Independence Army. We began to put our decision into action after we moved to the Mt. Paektu area and West Jiandao.

We had previously met with the headquarters of the Independence Army on a few occasions on our own initiative. They were not opposed to our idea

of cooperation between the anti-Japanese national forces, but they had given no answer to our proposal for an alliance between the KPRA and the Independence Army.

At this very moment we gave Choe Chun Guk, who was being sent to southern Manchuria, an assignment to work for cooperation with the Independence Army.

On arrival in southern Manchuria, Choe Chun Guk delivered my letter to Choe Yun Gu and negotiated with him in secret about the merger of the two armies. Hearing the explanation of our policy for joint action against the Japanese, Choe Yun Gu readily supported the idea of bringing the two armies together. He was a fairly close acquaintance of mine and was the most stoutly anti-Japanese officer in the Independence Army.

"My unit exists only in name," Choe Yun Gu said. "It's like an empty *kimchi* jar, with all the stuff taken out and eaten. I myself should like to take my unit to Commander Kim Song Ju right now. If my old commander finally refuses, I'm ready to go alone to the revolutionary army."

Choe Chun Guk said that he did not wish to see the Independence Army splitting up, even though the deputy commander and his followers would be most welcome at Mt. Paektu. He persuaded Choe Yun Gu to try to bring his commander to a better understanding of the need for an alliance with the KPRA.

Saying he was not confident he could persuade his commander, Choe Yun Gu nevertheless promised that he would do everything possible to effect joint action against the Japanese. Through his many years of experience with the degeneration and corruption of the nationalist movement in the Independence Army, Choe Yun Gu had learned that the common front was the only way to survival.

Kim Hwal Sok attempted to reduce the loss of his army through separate actions by three groups, but that proved not to be an effective measure. His army, which was not solidly based on the people, had no sources for new recruits.

Choe Yun Gu felt anguish as he pondered over the question of why:

Why his army was going downhill while the People's Revolutionary Army was thriving, why discipline in his army was loose and out of control while the People's Revolutionary Army was so well disciplined as to strike terror into the hearts of the enemy, why his army had to rob the people of their property to maintain its existence while the revolutionary army obtained everything it needed without having to encroach upon the people's property, why his army was suffering defeat in every battle with the Japanese while the revolutionary army was winning every battle, why his army hated the revolutionary army as they would a bitter cucumber while the revolutionary army regarded his army as a friendly force. ...

Choe Yun Gu finally decided the reason lay in the matter of popular basis: his army had to fight in isolation without active support from the people because it was not solidly based on the people, which meant that his army was unable to stop the process of degeneration and corruption because it had no popular basis. He believed that his army, which ruled over the heads of the people and was divorced from them, had a gloomy future, whereas the People's Revolutionary Army, which was born of the people and was sharing its fate with them, had a bright future.

It was inevitable that the Independence Army had a weak popular basis. Its activities and aspirations were motivated by bourgeois nationalism, which had nothing in common with people-centred ideology. Bourgeois nationalism was characterized by its failure to regard the working masses as the motive force of the revolution, by its mistrust in the unity of different sections of the anti-Japanese patriotic forces and by its hatred for communism.

These were exactly what Choe Yun Gu saw as the fundamental reasons for his army's decline, isolation and disintegration. He came to the conclusion that his army could remain loyal to its original cause only through an alliance with the People' Revolutionary Army and through its activity on the popular foundation that had been established by the communists.

Kim Hwal Sok, however, rejected the proposal for cooperation, saying that it would only benefit the communists and that if he agreed, his army would cease to exist. His position was that he would not share the board with

communists, even if it meant the premature death of his own army. He would not yield an inch, warning his men that they should not be deceived by communist propaganda, that communists knew nothing but class struggle, that their proposal for a united front was a mere deceptive trick, and that the best way was to keep away from such treacherous people.

While the commander and his deputy were carrying out the unsuccessful discussions, the situation in the Independence Army became critical. Their food and clothing supplies ran out and the army was tightly surrounded by the enemy. To make matters worse, desertion, surrender and death from starvation occurred in succession, and the morale of the officers and men fell to its lowest depth.

Choe Yun Gu opened negotiations with his commander to make a final decision. He said, "If you refuse to accept my proposal, I have no other choice but to leave you, taking with me those who support the idea of alliance, even if it means dividing the army in two. If we hesitate any further without making a decision, we shall all be destroyed. Give us permission to go to Jiang Jie-shi or to Kim Il Sung."

Finding himself in a corner, Kim Hwal Sok agreed to permit freedom for his men. By his orders, all the officers and men of his army assembled. After giving a grim outline of the difficult circumstances of the army, the commander said, "Anyone who wishes to go to Kim Il Sung's army, step forward."

At first, his men did not budge. This was natural because they did not know their commander's real intention. He might have been wishing to ferret out pro-communist elements so as to deal with them one way or the other.

Kim Myong Jun was the first to step forward. This was followed by many others. A pioneer can provide a solution to however difficult a problem. Kim Myong Jun was the pioneer. That is why I have loved him dearly ever since he came over to the People's Revolutionary Army.

"It was Deputy Commander Choe Yun Gu who fanned my decision at that time," Kim Myong Jun said in recollection of the event. "Although he said nothing, his glance encouraged me to act on my decision."

The Independence Army was divided in consequence, and they all wept.

The commander and his deputy and everyone else wept. What pain they must have suffered as the body of their fighting force was torn apart! With a promise to meet again when Korea became independent, the two groups left each other in different directions. One under Choe Yun Gu's command came over to the Korean People's Revolutionary Army, and the other group of several dozen men under Kim Hwal Sok's command moved towards Fenghuangcheng. The last armed force of *Kukmin-bu*, which had been fighting against the Japanese imperialists in southern Manchuria, was dissolved in this manner.

"We've made this long, roundabout way to come to you, Commander Kim Song Ju," Choe Yun Gu said when he met me at Nanpaizi. "We could have taken a straighter route... but we were too doubting to do so."

I praised him from the bottom of my heart for his just action.

His action was a remarkable event that should be highlighted in the history of our national liberation struggle and the history of the united-front movement in our country. It meant the triumph of the united-front policy that we had pursued consistently from the early years of the anti-Japanese armed struggle; it was also the pinnacle of communist struggle to carry out the Ten-Point Programme of the ARF. The alliance of the two armies served as an example that should be followed by the communists and nationalists.

The distinguished services rendered by Choe Chun Guk and Choe Yun Gu in setting the example have their legitimate place in one page of the history of our national united-front movement and in the annals of great national unity. That is why I still remember Choe Yun Gu. I can say that he was the forerunner of an alliance with communism who put it into practice, that he was a large-minded man. Based on this fact, the historians who deal with the anti-Japanese armed struggle must give prominence to his contribution when they write the history of the national united-front movement.

I would say that Choe Yun Gu's coming over to our side provided the revolutionary movement with a link between my father's generation and his son's generation. From the point of view of his ideological trend, Choe Yun

Gu belonged to my father's generation. Most of his generation aspired after nationalism, whereas ours supported communism. The patriots of the two generations, who considered communism and nationalism to be diametrically opposed to each other, finally took the road of joint anti-Japanese struggle by transcending the differences in ideology.

Choe Yun Gu's case proves that people of different ideas, religious beliefs and political views will be fully able to unite and live in harmony if they cherish true love for their country and nation.

Later, Choe Yun Gu was admitted into the Communist Party. Fighting courageously in an important post as a staff officer for victory in the anti-Japanese revolution, he fell in a battle in Huadian County towards the end of 1938. I bitterly mourned his death, the death of my father's comrade-in-arms and my own comrade in the revolution. It is most regrettable that he did not see the day of liberation after paving the road to alliance with the communists.

Kim Hwal Sok, by contrast with Choe Yun Gu, was captured by the enemy on his way to Jiang Jie-shi, and became unable to carry out his duty as the commander of the Independence Army. Sensing that he was going to Jiang with illusions about him, the Japanese imperialists snared him by sending their agent to him in the guise of Jiang Jie-shi's special envoy. The agent showed him forged credentials signed allegedly by Jiang and said that Generalissimo Jiang wanted an interview with him. Kim Hwal Sok, who was blinded with his hope of seeing Jiang, followed the spy rashly, without fully identifying the man. The spy thus lured him to the headquarters of his gendarmerie.

Kim Hwal Sok's own sick, anti-communist and sycophantic mind was the cause of his ruin.

Our nation's history shows that sycophants and anti-communists have, without exception, taken the road of treachery to the nation.

Sun Yat-sen, though a leader of bourgeois democratic revolution, was able to continue with revolution, enjoying support from the broad section of the population, because he cooperated with communists. Kim Ku marked a proud page in the nation's history when he made a fresh start and went from

anti-communism to patriotic alliance with communism in his closing years. Had he taken the road of alliance with communists, Kim Hwal Sok, too, could have ended his life as a patriot loved by the people, instead of falling into a trap laid by the Japanese.

Whenever I meet people affected with the disease of anti-communism I point out to them that anti-communism will not only ruin them as individuals, but also lead them into treachery against the nation and their fellow people. Going against the communists, who stand on the side of the people, amounts to going against the people. This is precisely the reason why alliance with communists means love for one's country and nation and for one's fellow people, whereas anti-communism signifies treachery against one's country, one's nation and one's fellow people.

Kim Myong Jun, who followed Choe Yun Gu to the People's Revolutionary Army, remained loyal to the revolution all along. After liberation he served as my adjutant for many years. He was honest and simple and assisted me a great deal by always being at my side.

Comrade Kim Jong Il puts him forward as an example and looks after him well, saying that he is the last survivor of the Independence Army.

Hong Chun Su, too, came over to the People's Revolutionary Army from the Independence Army.

The historical experience of the Independence Army force, which joined the Korean People's Revolutionary Army in the war of national liberation against the Japanese imperialist aggressors, eloquently proves that all the patriotic national forces in the north and south of Korea and abroad can and must join efforts in the struggle against foreign forces by transcending differences in thought, ideas and political views.

4. Village Headman Wang and Police Chief Wang

Among our Chinese friends who gave the Korean People's Revolutionary Army strong moral and material support in the latter half of the 1930s were two Chinese men, surnamed Wang, serving in enemy institutions. One was the headman of the village of Dahuanggou, Linjiang County, and the other was the chief of the puppet Manchukuo police substation at Jiajiaying, in the same county. The local people called the latter Police Chief Wang.

How was it that these two Wangs, who were executing the Japanese colonial policy at the lowest rungs of the administrative ladder, came in touch with the KPRA, sympathized with the anti-Japanese revolution and finally came out in its support? Political work with these Chinese was organized by the great leader himself after the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War.

The great leader Comrade Kim Il Sung met each of them only once. But he remembered them even after the lapse of many decades.

I first heard about Village Headman Wang from Ju Jae Il, political instructor for the 1st Company of the 8th Regiment. On return from his work at Dahuanggou, Linjiang County, which was under enemy control, Ju Jae Il gave me a detailed account of its village headman, saying that if we were to extend the ARF organization to Dahuanggou and its surrounding area, we should first win this man over.

Ju Jae Il had heard about the village headman from a man he had admitted to the Party when he was Party branch secretary at Niuxinshan, Sandaogou, Helong County. The secret of this new member's identity got out by accident, and he was no longer able to stay in Helong. The Party organization sent him to Linjiang into hiding since one of his relatives was said to be living in that county. He had moved into a peasant hut near Dahuanggou and was living a hand-to-mouth existence in it. Refusing to

abandon his organizational activities, he was said to be rallying reliable people around him.

When he met the company political instructor, Ju Jae Il, he asked Ju to put him in touch with the organization.

I told the company political instructor to go and see him immediately at Dahuanggou, form an organization with the people for whom he stood surety, and then link them to the organizational line. The political instructor met him again, telling him that Headquarters would help him in his work and that he should try to expand the ARF organization. This was how one of our organizations was formed at Dahuanggou. It was probably the first of the ARF organizations we established in Linjiang County.

I gave the political instructor an assignment in addition to win over Village Headman Wang. Thus the name of the village headman got on our recruiting list. We learned about him in detail through the underground organization at Dahuanggou over the next half a year.

Our work with Wang bore fruit in the spring of 1938.

This was the time when we were moving to Changbai after finishing military and political training at Matanggou. As we would be marching by way of Dahuanggou, I decided to take time off and see the village headman on our arrival in Linjiang. While marching south towards Changbai, we went through many hardships. When we reached a point about a dozen kilometres from Dahuanggou, our food supplies ran out, making it impossible for us to continue our march. The men were too exhausted.

In these circumstances, it would be impossible for the unit to go as far as Changbai. The men needed food to go on marching and fighting, but we had none. We might fight and capture food from the enemy, but the men were too exhausted to move, still less fight. It was then that I thought of settling the affair with Wang. I believed that if I succeeded in my work with him, I could not only obtain food but create favourable conditions for our activities as well.

Near Dahuanggou was a village by name of Xiaohuanggou. The underground organization at Xiaohuanggou was also connected with the man who had been admitted to the Party by political instructor Ju Jae Il at

Niuxinshan. It was now in great danger. The organization had done a good job and was spreading offshoots in neighbouring villages. But the enemy caught it by the tail and fell upon the village, killing the organization members and setting fire to their houses. Even old people and children were shot or stabbed with bayonets.

The organization members and villagers who had escaped death fled to Dahuanggou, where their lives were in the hands of Village Headman Wang. At that time Wang was also the chief of the Self-Defence Corps. The fate of the organization members of Xiaohuanggou and refugees depended on Wang's attitude. That was another reason I felt it urgent to hurry up with my decision to win over Wang and obtain his support and assistance.

I sent my operatives to Dahuanggou to approach the headman.

The men were determined to win Wang over, but were afraid they might founder on a submerged rock because they knew that Wang was also the chief of the Self-Defence Corps.

Nevertheless, I did not doubt our success, for I judged him to be a man of conscience. I had learned that during his office as village headman and Self-Defence Corps chief he had harmed no one in his area, and that was a major indication that he was a conscientious man. In those days, any man blinded by a sense of self-protection and by greed for fortune did not scruple to harm a few patriots in order to score in his own favour once he was installed in the post of Self-Defence Corps chief or village headman.

In this climate Wang had not touched anybody or informed on anyone. He had done nothing against the refugees and bereft families from Xiaohuanggou, but had turned a blind eye on their arrival, allowing them to settle down in the area under his control. Had he been an evil man, he would not have behaved thus. He would have informed the higher authorities that the Reds had fled to his village from the Red village, or he would have got his Self-Defence Corps to hunt down the refugees, just to win a bonus.

In fact, it took more guts than normal to allow the survivors of the Japanese atrocities to settle down in his village and to look after them. Doing this would involve the risk of exposing the village headman himself

to severe punishment. We could therefore say that Wang was ready to face the worst.

I told my operatives going to Dahuanggou that the village headman was quite conscientious, and that if they should approach him boldly and explain to him clearly our aim of fighting against the Japanese imperialists, they would be able to bring him round to our side.

On arrival at Dahuanggou, the operatives met Wang through the intermediary of the man living in the peasant hut, and made a proposal for cooperation with us. Wang readily agreed, and even asked for an interview with me. Promising that he would comply with any request of the revolutionary army, he earnestly asked for an opportunity to see General Kim Il Sung.

My officers argued pro and con over his request. As there had been frequent subversive activities by the enemy against our Headquarters, the officers were all getting nervous.

I persuaded the arguing officers to consent, and invited Wang to our temporary camp.

As soon as he received the invitation, the village headman obtained large amounts of food, footwear and other supplies through his villagers and brought them to our Headquarters. Wang was a handsome man of about 35, gentle, well-mannered and open-hearted. He made a good impression on me.

After some chatting about his family connections and about his health, I spoke highly of the fact that he lived with a strong national conscience, as befitted an intellectual, and then encouraged him to help us in his position as village headman.

“Neither Japan nor Manchukuo will last long,” I said. “Manchukuo appointed you village headman, but you should make the most of the job for the sake of your motherland, your fellow countrymen and the revolution, not for Japan or Manchukuo. To this end, you should organize the people and help the revolutionary army in good faith. I believe that you will not fail our expectations.”

Wang was very grateful to me for my confidence in him.

“I cannot find words to express my gratitude to you for your confidence

in a man like me. I'll remember your words all my life. General, and I'll do my best to fight," he said.

He had brought along brandy and a snack, and I thought this showed that he was a thoughtful and sociable man. We drank the brandy in my tent. He drank first to assure the purity of the brandy, then offered me a glass.

As the brandy warmed him up, he broached his family background, a subject he had never spoken of to anybody else. It was interesting and as well-woven as a story, and moved me to tears.

His father was a Manchu who was born and grew up in Dongning County. Driven by poverty from place to place until he was 40 years old, his father finally married a woman with whom he had fallen in love.

In the course of time a lovable boy was born to them, a boy destined to be the village headman. He grew up to be good-looking and proved himself clever as he grew older. Because of poverty, however, the parents were unable to bring him up with any of the benefits given to other, richer children.

The father always thought of finding a better place to live in than Manchuria. If he could find such a place, he would leave Manchuria at once with the boy. At that moment, he talked to some young Koreans stopping for a while in his village to earn travelling money to go to the eastern land across the river. They told him that Russia was a good place to live in.

Many of the old-timers like my father and grandfather used to call Russia *Arassa*, or "the eastern land across the river".

Wang's father went with the young Koreans when they left for Russia, taking his son with him.

Wang and the young people travelled around gold mines to make money, but they failed to become rich and settled down together to do farming instead. In the course of time, a Korean village developed, centring around these young men engaged in farming. Although he was a Chinese, Wang's father lived among the Koreans. Though from different nationalities, they lived in as much harmony as if they were blood brothers.

The boy went to school in the Korean village, so that he got used to

Korean customs and spoke Korean well.

Some years later, a political storm between new and old parties began to sweep over Russia. The new party meant the Bolshevik Party, while the old party was the White Party. The villagers suffered greatly in that storm. When the stronger force of Bolsheviks drove out the counterrevolutionaries from the village, the village became a Bolshevik world; when the White Party prevailed, the village changed into a White world overnight. The villagers were gradually divided into opposing camps, one supporting the Communist Party, the other the White Party. Even families split up in support of one side or the other; for example, the eldest brother siding with the Communist Party and the second or third brother siding with the Whites, both arguing against each other.

Such disputes even produced casualties. Wang's father, too, died a tragic death at the hands of the White Party. The young boy became an orphan. The villagers were sympathetic with him, but none of them dared to take care of him, afraid of incurring the wrath of the old party, for his father had supported the new party. The Whites, insisting that the Bolsheviks be totally destroyed, were going to do away with the boy.

At this critical moment, a young Korean who had come to Russia from Dongning County to earn money, took the boy and ran across the border, heading for Dongning County on a cold autumn day. The young man intended to find the boy's mother, but unfortunately on their way they were captured by mounted bandits. The bandits wanted to hold the boy for ransom. When they found out the boy had no guardian, they were going to kill him.

At this moment, the band's second in command said, "What's the use of killing the poor boy? Give him to me and set the Korean free to go wherever he likes." The Korean, robbed of his travelling money and the boy, went away, God only knows where, and the boy remained in the den of the bandits under the protection of the second boss. The man had prevented the boy from being killed because he'd taken a fancy to the child. One night he took off with the boy, escaping from the bandits to Linjiang County, where he bought land and a house in the mountains. He was now rich and became the boy's

foster-father. He was rich because he had hauled off a large sum of the bandits' ill-gotten money.

The foster-father was named Wang, originally from Shandong. He gave his foster-son the name of Wang as well. He was under the impression that power meant happiness, and this was his outlook on life. To bring up his foster-son to be a powerful man, he gave him a good education and got him installed later in the post of village headman.

The village headman said that he was greatly indebted to his foster-father, and added that as long as he lived he would remember the Korean who had protected him and brought him back to Manchuria.

"I have money and property, but I regret that I cannot repay my debt to this Korean," he said with tears in his eyes. "I sympathize with the Koreans and grieve over their misfortune, thus feeling that I'm proving myself worthy of my former saviour's benevolence. Most of the refugees from Xiaohuanggou are Koreans. I look after them at the risk of my life because this gives me the feeling of bowing to my benefactor."

Wang was a man with a strong sense of moral obligation. At his words that he was helping Koreans with the feeling of bowing to his benefactor, I was deeply moved.

I said, "I am thankful to you for your sympathy with the Koreans and for your effort to save them from their difficult circumstances. A man who values moral obligation can do good things not only for his benefactor but also for his fellow people. I hope that from now you see yourself as a village headman who serves the people, not Manchukuo."

Wang pledged over and over again that he would live up to my expectation of him.

On his return to his village I provided him with two escorts.

From that day on he became our friend and helped us a great deal. If he is still alive somewhere, I wish I could see him, but I am very sorry that there is no way of knowing where he is or whether he is alive or dead.

Police Chief Wang was also won over much the same way as Village Headman Wang. Kim Phyong, political commissar of the 7th Regiment, was

the first to tell me about the police chief. At one point Kim had taken Choe Il Hyon's company to Changbai and Linjiang and directed small unit activities there. While sending off the small units to different places and supervising them, he worked among the local people. One of his small units was active round Sandaogou and Wudaogou, Linjiang County.

One day a guerrilla from the area came to the man in charge of his small group and said that his local group's activities were being hampered greatly by the presence of the police substation located at Jiajiaying. He asked how it should be dealt with. He probably wanted to strike the substation hard. The people who travelled to Linjiang, Mengjiang or Fusong had to pass through Jiajiaying, where the police substation was located. The existence of police control there posed a real problem. The political commissar met the man, and then reported the matter to me.

I told the political commissar to try and put the police substation under his control. An attack could be made any time, but it would have a harmful effect on us and cause a nuisance, so I advised him to approach the police substation boldly and bring it under our influence.

A few days after, the political commissar came and said that in a forest near Jiajiaying there lived a man with whom he had become acquainted when he was working as the secretary of a district Party committee in Yanji County, and that it might be possible to get in touch with the chief of the substation with the help of this man. He added that the man was reliable because he had once been a platoon leader of the Red Guard in Yanji County. The man had been suspected of involvement in "Minsaengdan" and was rescued from being executed and sent to the enemy area. It was Koreans in the district Party who had rescued him. I think his surname was Kim.

Kim earned a living by hunting, and as the police chief was also fond of hunting, they became friends, so I was told.

I told the political commissar that since he was the only man who knew the hunter, he himself should obtain the hunter's assistance in approaching the police chief. So far the process was similar to that of winning over the village headman. It was rare that a former organization member was on

intimate terms with a policeman, but it was possible. Nevertheless, it was necessary to know how the hunter had become friends with the police chief. This knowledge would assure a direct access to the police chief.

After talking to the man in the mountain hut, the political commissar said that the hunter was Red in mind, although he had left the guerrilla zone a long time ago. Seeing the political commissar in civilian clothes, the man even suspected him to be a secret agent of the Japanese. A soldier in civilian clothes was misunderstood as such now and then.

It was not until the political commissar said he had been sent by me that the hunter dropped his suspicion. He was bitterly remorseful that he had come to the enemy area without being able to prove that he was not guilty of involvement in the "Minsaengdan". He said, "Please take me to General Kim Il Sung, so that I can tell him that I was not a 'Minsaengdan' member, and I also hope you will stand surety for me. If the General trust me, I will join the People's Revolutionary Army."

The political commissar said, "General Kim has already resolved the problem of 'Minsaengdan' so you can take your place once more on the revolutionary front with clear conscience. I hope you will work proudly and stalwartly." The hunter was apparently moved to tears at these words. He had become a close friend of Wang the year before. The police chief had occasionally appeared in his hunting ground. Wang used to hunt only one or two animals at one time, whereas the hunter caught four or five.

One day the police chief had dropped in at the hut to get some pointers from him on hunting. Marvelling at the man's profound knowledge on this topic, Wang declared that he was obviously no ordinary hunter, and that he seemed to be more like a thinker or an intellectual.

At this, the hunter proposed that they hold a contest the next day to see whether he was a real hunter or not. Wang agreed.

The hunter won the game and Wang treated him to a drink. They drank in the mountain hut. Wang proposed that they swear brotherhood. The hunter declined, however, saying that he would think the matter over a little further because he would have to be Wang's elder brother if he was to agree to the

proposal. He then asked casually how Wang, a man with the heavy duties of substation chief, could afford to be away from his office so often to go hunting.

Wang replied, “I go hunting not because of free time but because I want to forget my troubles. The Japanese are really foul. They post the Manchukuo police wherever there is the most danger of being killed, and even Japanese policemen of equal rank to us yell commands at us and curse at us for no particular reason. I can’t stand the insult of my situation.”

Hearing this account from the hunter, the political commissar gave him the job of building a subordinate organization of the ARF in the area of Jiajiaying. He also gave him the immediate task of arranging an interview between the commissar and the police chief.

The following day the hunter brought Police Chief Wang to the rendezvous. The police chief also brought a bottle of brandy and a snack, just as the village headman had done. Brandy was a major means of promoting social fellowship among the officials of Manchukuo.

The police chief was a man much heavier in build and more violent in character than the village headman, but he was quick in making decisions. He did not stop to ponder over anything too much, and his answers were direct and clear-cut.

The political commissar of the 7th Regiment introduced himself to him as a political commissar of one of Kim Il Sung’s units. He said, point-blank, that he had been ordered by Commander Kim to negotiate with Wang for joint action against the Japanese, and asked if he was ready to join hands.

Wang gave him a bewildered look at first, but became himself again very soon and said, “Please don’t make haste. Let’s drink first and then talk about it.” Growing mellow with a few rounds of drink, Wang slapped the political commissar on the knee and exclaimed, “I like you, even though you aren’t tall. I’m really surprised at your audacity when you said who you were to a policeman wearing a sabre!”

“That’s what Commander Kim Il Sung’s men are like,” the political commissar replied.

“Take me to Commander Kim,” Wang said. “Then I will let him know

my decision, but on condition that you join my *jiajiali*, so that I can trust you completely."

Through this first negotiation Wang came to know that his hunter friend was also a communist.

"I thought the secret of my *jiajiali* was above everything else," Wang said, "but I see that the communists are closer with their secrets, for the hunter has never let me know he was a communist, even after he joined my *jiajiali*."

I told the political commissar to swear brotherhood with Wang, because joining his *jiajiali* would not mean changing his surname. I also told him to bring Wang to my Headquarters.

I met Wang at a place near Jiajiaying, and found him as acceptable as the village headman. I remember that he made me a present of three roots of wild *insam* (ginseng–Tr.).

He readily agreed to my proposal for joint action against the Japanese. He spoke and behaved like a man.

"I was compelled to put on a police uniform to earn my living, not to fight against the Communist Party," he said frankly. "Seeing the way the Japanese are behaving, I think of throwing away my gun twelve times a day. I have no objection to your proposal for joint action against the Japanese. I'll keep my job as chief of the substation as you tell me to, while taking joint action with you against the Japanese. Still, I wonder if the other guerrillas will ignore my police uniform as you do, Commander Kim? I'm afraid of being killed by bullets from both sides."

"Don't worry about that," I said. "If you work in the cause of justice, the public will understand you. We in the revolutionary army don't harm people who are against the Japanese even though they may be working in enemy institutions, I can assure of that. What I ask you to do for us is simply not to stand in our way, and this also means working against the Japanese. You can also send us information every now and then and maintain close ties with the hunter and help him all you can."

From then on the police chief helped us a great deal. Under his protection

the hunter formed a subordinate organization of the ARF in Jiajiaying.

We received a lot of valuable information from the two Wangs. The Self-Defence Corps men in the village of Dahuanggou even waved their handkerchiefs as a sign of welcome to my comrades when they saw them.

Through our work with the two Wangs we gained invaluable experience in transforming people.

I believe that we can change anything in the world. Transforming human beings is more difficult than transforming nature and society, but if we make the effort we can transform people too. By nature, human beings aspire to what is beautiful, noble and just. We can, therefore, transform everyone if we give them the proper education. Human transformation means, in essence, the transformation of people's ideology.

But here we must take care not to judge people's ideology superficially, by merely looking at their insignia or uniforms. In other words, their ideology must not be judged by job or rank. Of course, we cannot deny that landowners and capitalists have the ideology of the exploiting class, and that the workers, peasants and working intellectuals have the revolutionary ideology of the working class.

We must know, however, that people in police uniform, like Hong Jong U[6], can be more or less conscientious and progressive in their ideology. By progressive ideology I mean no less than love for humanity, love for the people, love for one's nation, love for one's country. In the last analysis, human conscience finds expression in this love.

In human transformation we do not question people's official positions or nationalities either. We unhesitatingly joined hands with Chinese people and welcomed even those Chinese who served in enemy institutions as long as they had a strong conscience and loved their country. Since we had the experience and ability of transforming Koreans working in enemy institutions, it meant that we could transform Chinese working in enemy institutions as well. The principle of human transformation is not limited by nationality. Since we had brought Korean policemen round to the side of the revolution, we could do the same thing with a Chinese policeman and a

Chinese village headman, right? During the anti-Japanese revolution, there were high-ranking, medium-ranking and low-ranking officers of the puppet Manchukuo army among the Chinese with whom we joined hands. They did many things that helped us, just as the two Wangs did.

Our nation has the task of reunifying the country as soon as possible. In south Korea there are many people who have different ideas from ours– landowners, capitalists and other people belonging to the exploiting class, as well as officials, entrepreneurs, and merchants. When the country is reunified, we shall have to live with these people of various strata in the same land. We communists cannot very well live alone, rejecting all these people because they have different ideas from ours, can we? We must find out the common denominator that will enable us to build a reunified country in cooperation even with people who are not communists. I believe that love for the country, love for the nation and love for the people is that common denominator. We shall be perfectly able to live and breathe the same air with people who love our country, our nation and our people.

5. Expedition to Rehe

The ill-fated expedition to Rehe put grave obstacles in the way of military actions and political activities by the Korean People's Revolutionary Army, as well as the development of the revolutionary movement in Korea, and brought about great losses to the anti-Japanese movement as a whole, in the years before and after the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War. The event provided a harsh lesson. The expedition served as a vivid example of the nature of the difficulties that revolutions in individual countries had to undergo in the mid-1930s, when revolutionary strategy was imposed upon these countries in the form of an "international line". It was also a notable historical event that showed in particular the enormity of the struggle that was needed to uphold and carry out the independent line in the Korean revolution.

In recollecting the plan of the expedition issued by the Comintern, Comrade Kim Il Sung said:

The plan of a Rehe expedition, or an expedition towards the Liaoxi-Rehe area[7], reached us in spring 1936. Wei Zheng-min conveyed the plan as a directive from the Comintern to the assembly of the commanding officers of the KPRA and the Anti-Japanese Allied Army in Northeast China, including Wang De-tai.

The gist of the directive was that the anti-Japanese armed forces operating in Northeast China should advance towards Liaoxi and Rehe, first, to link up with the Chinese Worker-Peasant Red Army advancing towards Rehe under the slogan of "Eastward attack for the recovery of lost land", and second, to help forestall the Japanese imperialist aggressor forces, which were invading the mainland of China. The strategic objective set by the Comintern was to effect a pincer movement on the Rehe line by the Worker-Peasant Red Army (renamed the 8th Route Army later), which was advancing northward and eastward, and the Anti-Japanese Allied Army forces advancing westward, so

as to unify the anti-Japanese struggles on the Chinese mainland and in Northeast China and bring about a fresh upsurge in the anti-Japanese movement as a whole.

In those days the 1st Army Corps in southern Manchuria, the 4th and 5th Corps in the eastern area of Jilin Province, the 3rd and 6th Corps in northern Manchuria and other Anti-Japanese Allied Army forces were deployed in the shape of a half moon in the areas east, southeast and northeast of Changchun. The Comintern's strategic intention was to push the semicircle westward so as to surround Changchun in the form of a half moon, then advance it further to the Rehe line to link it up with the Worker-Peasant Red Army forces advancing northward and strike the Japanese aggressor forces marching into the mainland of China.

Apparently the Comintern's aim in implementing the planned expedition to Rehe was to open up a new phase of unified development for the revolutions in the two regions of China.

In the years when the Japanese imperialists, having occupied the three provinces of Northeast China, were fabricating Manchukuo, the anti-Japanese struggle in China was waged mainly in its northeastern region.

In the course of its Long March of 25,000 *li*, the Chinese Communist Party criticized the Left opportunist line and established a new leadership system. From then on, the Chinese people's anti-Japanese struggle entered a new, higher stage of development. The rapid growth in the anti-Japanese movement on the mainland greatly encouraged the people in the Northeast.

The circulation of the plan of expedition made Rehe a hot spot of Sino-Japanese confrontation that focused the world's attention on it.

Situated on the coast of Bohai Bay, Rehe was the capital of Rehe Province in the years of Qing rule, and as such it was closely associated with the history of the Qing dynasty, established by the Manchus.

Rehe's close connection with the Qing can be explained by the fact that the city was the locale for a royal villa called the Guanghan Palace, constructed by Emperor Kangxi, and that in that villa Emperor Qianlong, renowned in the Qing dynasty, was born.

Rehe was also noted for its natural fortification. The mountain range southwest of Rehe was one of the strong points on the Great Wall, and this fact alone shows the importance of the place from the military point of view since ancient times.

Rehe was such a notable place that Pak Ji Won, a thinker of the *silhak* school in the 19th century who had been to China as an attendant of an envoy of the feudal government of the Ri dynasty, wrote his well-known *Rehe Diary*. In this long travelogue he gave a very vivid account of Chinese cultural institutions and of the features of Rehe as a city.

Rehe attracted worldwide attention for the first time when the Japanese imperialists, following the September 18 incident, occupied Jinzhou and Rehe to open a route for their invasion of the Chinese mainland.

When the plan of expedition to Rehe came down from the Comintern, reactions to it varied.

Wang De-tai was sceptical about the plan from the outset. He said he was not convinced that sending thousands of guerrillas to surround the capital of Manchukuo, where enemy forces were concentrated, and the scheme of moving guerrilla forces to the plains far away from their mountain bases were such good ideas. He pointed out that the plan was contrary to guerrilla tactics and that there was no reason why we should advance westward simply because the Worker-Peasant Red Army had started advancing eastward from the mainland. And finally he warned that we needed to be careful about following footsteps that had already failed previously in the attack on large cities.

Li Li-san, who was at the helm of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party early in the 1930s when warlords were running rampant, had a one-sided and exaggeratedly favourable view of the development of the revolutionary situation. He forced the adoption of an adventurist decision on the possibility of winning the revolution in just one or two provinces and ordered general political strikes and armed uprisings in many major cities. By this order of the Party leadership, the Red Army went ahead and attacked major cities. But the operations failed. In the light of this precedent, it was natural that some people expressed their dissatisfaction with the operations plan from the Comintern. In those days, most of the communists in the Anti-

Japanese Allied Army accepted everything the Comintern was doing as fair and above-board. In these circumstances it was noteworthy that some commanders approached the plan of expedition only half-heartedly.

Wei Zheng-min, however, did not take their opinions seriously. As the messenger from the Comintern, he spoke in defence of the plan. He brushed their objections aside by saying that all the Anti-Japanese Allied Army forces in southern, eastern and northern Manchuria were to participate in the expedition, that the internal situation was very good, and that there was therefore a good chance of success. He proceeded to Jinchuan County, where he conveyed the Comintern's expedition plan to the military and political cadres of the 1st Corps of the Anti-Japanese Allied Army in Northeast China.

Yang Jing-yu was said to have been greatly excited about the plan. On receiving the Comintern's directive, he clearly expressed his readiness to implement it. He had been making conscious efforts to achieve a link-up with the revolution on the mainland. Since the guerrilla base in southern Manchuria was close to the mainland, such a link-up was fully possible.

At that moment the Worker-Peasant Red Army on the mainland had marched north and was advancing eastward in order to create a high tide in the anti-Japanese national salvation movement throughout the country. Yang Jing-yu wanted to join the anti-Japanese vanguard advancing eastward in order to break through the enemy blockade, establish a direct link-up between the guerrilla warfare in Northeast China and the anti-Japanese war in the mainland and bring about cooperation between them. How enthusiastically he supported the expedition to Rehe was illustrated by the fact that despite the obvious failures of his subsequent two attempts, he made yet another attempt to advance on Rehe, that he had the *Song of Triumphant Westward Attack* composed and that he urged his men to carry out the expedition.

The Left adventurists entrenched in the Comintern sent their directive for the expedition to us as well on a number of occasions.

We got the Comintern's instructions for the first time in the spring of 1936, then in the summer of 1937 as the Sino-Japanese War was breaking out, and again in the spring of 1938.

In 1936 and 1937, as the Comintern was telling us to march westward, the Korean People's Revolutionary Army was in the process of stepping up preparations for founding the Party and for the movement of a united front after advancing to the Mt. Paektu area and West Jiandao. At the same time it was in high spirits, extending the armed struggle deep into the homeland. At this time also the Korean communists were making every effort to strengthen the driving force of the Korean revolution, unshakeable in their determination that they had to carry out the Korean revolution on their own. Prospects for the revolution were bright, but we had a mountain of work to do.

Thanks to our efforts, revolutionary organizations had appeared like bamboo shoots after the rain in the area along the Amnok River and in the homeland, and tens of thousands of new revolutionaries were maturing. The Korean People's Revolutionary Army was faced with the important task of providing armed protection for these organizations and revolutionaries and of giving a great push to the revolution in the homeland from its bases in the Mt. Paektu area and West Jiandao.

What were our feelings in this situation when we were told to go on the expedition to Rehe, a venture that promised no chance of success? Although the Comintern had ordered us to join the expedition, I considered it reckless from the outset.

We adhered to a line of independence in the Korean revolution, which we ourselves had set in motion in those days. We fought many major battles in West Jiandao in cooperation with the 2nd Division of the 1st Corps under the command of Cao Guo-an, and we also conducted large-scale offensive operations in the homeland. Meanwhile, we filled in the military vacuum in some areas of southern Manchuria, which had been occupied earlier by the 1st Corps, and provided sincere support for the forces on the expedition to Liaoxi and Rehe. In other words, we killed two birds with one stone by maintaining firmly the independent line of spreading the flames of armed struggle into the homeland, while at the same time creating favourable conditions for the implementation of the Comintern's line.

When the armed forces in southern Manchuria were advancing towards

Rehe and Liaoxi, Wei Zheng-min, the messenger from the Comintern, followed us, instead of going with the 1st Corps.

The absurdity and infeasibility of the expedition plan became even more pronounced after the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War. Yet at this stage the Comintern, instead of discarding the dream of surrounding Changchun in a semicircle, continued to urge the Anti-Japanese Allied Army forces to advance westward against heavy odds. As the Sino-Japanese confrontation culminated in an all-out war and in this context the anti-Japanese movement mounted to a rapid upsurge, the Comintern apparently judged that the decisive moment for the pincer movement had come.

The year the Sino-Japanese War broke out, cooperation between the nationalists and communists in China was realized for the second time. The Worker-Peasant Red Army under the leadership of the Communist Party, reorganized as the 8th Route Army of the National Revolutionary Army, was advancing towards Shuiyuan, Chahaer and Rehe in high spirits.

In its new instructions for the expedition, the Comintern demanded that the main force of the KPRA move down towards Hailong and the Jihai line, previously occupied by the 1st Corps, take direct part in the partial encirclement of Changchun and give active support to the 1st Corps, which was advancing towards Rehe. To do this meant that the KPRA had to advance westward, far away from its base in the Mt. Peaktu area.

To be candid, effecting a link-up with the 8th Route Army advancing towards Rehe was of no particular significance in a situation in which the whole of the Chinese mainland had become a theatre of war.

We judged the expedition plan to be unrealizable also because it did not accord with the requirements of guerrilla warfare. For a guerrilla army to leave the mountain area for the plains was as risky as fish leaving the water for land. The mountainous regions in northern, southern and eastern Manchuria had been settled by the communists for a long time. There were solid mass foundations in these regions and their geography was familiar to the guerrillas. The march route from these regions to Rehe or Liaoxi led over a wide plain along the railway in southern Manchuria, an area of numerous strategic enemy concentrations.

What would become of the lightly-equipped guerrilla forces in an encounter on the plains with the regular army forces of the enemy, which were equipped with heavy weapons and tanks? The outcome was as predictable as daylight.

From the point of view of the 8th Route Army, Rehe was within hailing distance just beyond the Great Wall, but it was hundreds of miles from Northeast China, where the Anti-Japanese Allied Army forces were operating.

For a relatively small guerrilla army to march such a long distance over the open plains, where enemy forces hundreds of times stronger were concentrated, was against common military sense.

More than once did I explain to Wei Zheng-min the strategic absurdity of the expedition to Rehe.

Wei Zheng-min, too, gradually came to have doubts about the absolute necessity of the expedition. However, he did not abandon the lingering hope that a successful expedition would stimulate an upsurge in the anti-Japanese movement throughout China once the Sino-Japanese War had broken out, and that the expedition would demonstrate the unbreakable anti-Japanese spirit and genuine patriotism of the communists, who consistently stuck to their cardinal principle of resistance to the Japanese. He was of the opinion that a successful expedition would enlist Jiang Jie-shi in an active struggle against the Japanese.

I told him that naturally it was necessary to bring about a high tide of anti-Japanese struggle throughout China, to demonstrate the stamina of the Communist Party, and to bring Jiang Jie-shi round to an active anti-Japanese struggle, but that he must not think of gaining such results at the expense of the revolution in Northeast China. I reminded him of the enormous bloodshed that the Korean and Chinese peoples and communists had already suffered for the revolution in Northeast China.

Wei Zheng-min, however, stuck to his position. He said that although the expedition plan had some strategic vulnerabilities, he could not abandon the idea without even trying and that although the expedition might take an undesirable toll or result in unexpected losses, it was impossible to do great things without incurring some loss or sacrifice.

He said that Zhou Bao-zhong's 5th Corps and 4th Corps had started implementing the instructions with great enthusiasm, regarding the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War as the best chance for a westward expedition.

I subsequently found out that, as Wei Zheng-min said, Zhou Bao-zhong, operating in the east of Jilin Province, had an optimistic view of the political and military situations in the Chinese mainland and northeastern region after the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War. He saw it as the start of a great event and declared that he needed to make use of all the possibilities simultaneously with this event to effect a direct link-up with the guerrilla force of the 8th Route Army advancing rapidly towards the Rehe line.

Not every one in his unit, however, supported the westward expedition. Chai Shi-rong, deputy commander of the 5th Corps, reportedly saw through the recklessness of the expedition at the outset and took a sceptical approach to the expedition plan.

Wei Zheng-min, though aware of the risky elements of the plan, maintained his support for the campaign. I regarded his attitude as an expression of his loyalty to the Chinese revolution.

He came from Shanxi Province in northern China to Manchuria in the early 1930s and participated in the revolution in Northeast China as a leading figure. He devoted himself heart and soul to Party work in Northeast China and to the raising of the Anti-Japanese Allied Army and played a great part in the success of military operations to destroy Japanese imperialism. He was unusually attached to, and interested in, the revolution in Northeast China.

However, he was not confined to the revolution in this part of China. He viewed it as a part of the overall Chinese revolution and was always more concerned about the latter, although he did regard the regional revolution as important as well. He was ready to accept any sacrifice, as long as it meant contributing to an upsurge in an all-China revolution.

I told him: "I understand your intention to carry out the expedition to Rehe in spite of the risk of sacrifice. However, I cannot help wondering seriously whether or not the Comintern, when planning the expedition, correctly understood the situation in Northeast China and the requirements of

the Chinese revolution, whether or not it made a correct calculation of the military feasibility of the plan, and especially whether or not the attempted expedition accords with the characteristics of guerrilla warfare. I can say that not only does the expedition plan lack an insight into the present state of the Chinese revolution, but also the Comintern has failed to give any kind of consideration to the Korean revolution. I think Wang Ming is a man of extraordinary subjectivity, even though he is a representative of the Chinese Communist Party to the Comintern."

Wei Zheng-min, too, admitted that Wang Ming was strongly subjective.

The expedition plan was issued in the name of the Comintern, but it was Wang Ming who drew up the plan and sent it down.

While in Moscow, Wang Ming formulated one line after another that contradicted the specific situation in China. The major failing of his line was that it was a Leftist deviation forced upon us in the name of the Comintern. Once an agreement had been reached on cooperation between the nationalists and communists following the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War, however, his line veered to the Right. He asserted that everything should be done through their cooperation and united front action.

Comrade Kim Il Sung, recollecting how carefully and shrewdly he went on to implement the directive for the Rehe expedition in the context of both the Korean and international revolutions, said as follows:

At that point we were still not fully aware of the opportunistic nature of Wang Ming's line. But even if we had known it, it would have been impossible to oppose the line pointblank or avoid its execution overtly. Wang Ming was a member of the Executive Committee of the Comintern and also its secretary. All the directives drafted by him were issued, not in his own name, but in the name of the Comintern.

I did not think the expedition plan was beneficial to the development of the revolution in Northeast China; furthermore, I believed that it was extremely one-sided and harmful as far as the Korean revolution was concerned. However, I maintained prudence in its implementation.

We had a serious discussion with Wei Zheng-min about the course of action to be taken by the Anti-Japanese Allied Army forces under the 1st Corps and the main force of the KPRA.

Wei Zheng-min wanted the KPRA to move into the Hailong region and the area of Jihai line, where the 1st Corps had been operating. To do this would make it impossible for us to consolidate the military and political success we had achieved in the Mt. Paektu area. I therefore answered that we would conduct mobile operations in Linjiang, Fusong and Mengjiang over a period of time for the development of the Korean revolution, and then move gradually into that area when the time was ripe.

At this time, the KPRA had a large number of recruits from West Jiandao and the homeland. It would not be favourable to leave our original theatre of operations for an unfamiliar place without giving the recruits adequate training. I said without reserve that we would not move far away from West Jiandao and the Mt. Paektu area because we had to preserve and expand the revolutionary organizations that had been formed in the homeland and step up the offensive operations into the homeland.

Wei Zheng-min agreed to my policy.

In those days, Yang Jing-yu was fighting hard-fought battles in an effort to bring success to the Rehe expedition by riding on the tide of anti-Japanese sentiments, which were rapidly mounting under the stimulus of the Sino-Japanese War.

In spring 1938, however, his 1st Corps had a hard time since it was surrounded by the enemy the moment it set off on the expedition. To make matters worse, Cheng Bin, commander of the 1st Division, surrendered to the enemy, taking his unit along with him. His surrender messed up the 1st Corps' plan for a westward campaign.

In mid-July Yang Jing-yu called an emergency meeting of the officers of the 1st Corps at Laoling, where he officially cancelled his expedition plan and adopted measures to reorganize so as to prevent the divulgence of the secrets.

Cheng Bin's surrender was a great shock to us as well. The 1st Corps was in danger of crumbling. In order to help it, we prepared weapons and other war

supplies and ordered part of our force to start moving towards the Tonghua line by way of Jinchuan and Liuhe Counties by skirting Mengjiang County.

The aim of this movement was to scatter the enemy force, which was surrounding the 1st Corps, and to provide the 1st Corps with a possibility of breaking through the encirclement. The movement to compel the enemy to disperse its force was intended as a means to rescue the comrades-in-arms of the 1st Corps prior to any consideration of the execution of the expedition plan. We wanted to preserve the anti-Japanese forces in Northeast China and strengthen the militant ties of friendship between the Korean and Chinese communists and people, a friendship that had been established through many years of joint struggle.

While our detachment was advancing towards the Tonghua line, deliberately making loud noises to attract the enemy's attention, I slipped far into the homeland in command of a small unit and took new steps to intensify the revolutionary struggle in Korea.

Meanwhile, the main force destroyed the enemy in many places. The raid on the road construction site near Badaojiang was most impressive. Large numbers of Japanese and Manchukuo troops, as well as armed police and Self-Defence Corps, were stationed at Badaojiang. At that time, these enemy troops were frequently ordered out on "punitive" operations against the KPRA forces fighting in the Linjiang area. At the same time they were also engaged in a large-scale project to construct military roads and railways that went from Kanggye and Junggang in Korea to the interior of Manchuria, by way of Linjiang.

We raided a large construction site between Tonghua and Linjiang, turning it into pandemonium in an instant and destroying a large number of guard troops.

When the battle was over, a few Japanese contractors requested an interview with me. At the interview they offered a liberal amount of money for their lives.

I said, "By undertaking this construction, you are, of course, helping Japan's act of aggression. But we have no intention of killing you. We, the revolutionary army, do not accept the ransom you offer. Taking it would be an act of banditry. You may go, but you must keep your hands off this project. If you wish to contract, do it elsewhere." We then released them.

Our raid on the construction site gave rise to the widespread news that Kim Il Sung's guerrillas had appeared in the west of Linjiang. Apparently the contractors spread the news far and wide.

Following the battle of Badaojiang, we destroyed the pursuing enemy around Naichagou and Waichagou, then fought the enemy again at Xigang, Fusong County, thus drawing its forces towards us.

This elusive tactical movement compelled the enemy to disperse its forces here and there in utter confusion with no idea of where the KPRA was actually operating. This meant that our tactical movements and series of offensive operations aimed at rescuing the 1st Corps were successful. In subsequent days, Yang Jing-yu and Wei Zheng-min reiterated that the sound of our gunshots in Linjiang, Fusong and Mengjiang had proved decisive in helping the 1st Corps out of its difficulties.

The Anti-Japanese Allied Army forces in northern Manchuria also suffered no small casualties in the westward campaign. A number of army corps in northern Manchuria started the expedition in July 1937 and fully committed themselves to the campaign in 1938.

As was the case in southern Manchuria, the expedition by the northern forces ended in failure. The Rehe expedition, which confused the revolution in Northeast China and took a heavy toll in reckless battles for some years, fizzled out in southern Manchuria in 1938, and in northern Manchuria in 1939.

Why, then, did the expedition, which wasted so much energy, manpower and materials, fail?

Many analysts have attributed the failure to the well-established order of the Japanese and the Manchukuo ruling machinery and to the overwhelming number of the enemy forces–that is, to objective conditions. I think this is a correct analysis.

The policy of internment villages[8], pursued by the enemy in real earnest at this period, cut off ties between the guerrillas and the people. As the enemy put it, it was a "separation of bandits from the people". This policy consolidated the ruling institutions of the enemy, whereas it laid many obstacles in the way of the anti-Japanese armed forces. These obstacles kept

the expedition almost out of contact with the masses, hence from its route of food supplies. The people, confined in their internment villages, had no means of getting in touch with the expeditionary forces, still less of sending supplies to them even though they wanted to. In these circumstances, the expeditionary forces had no alternative but to capture food and clothing from the enemy. The sound of their gunshots provided the enemy with ceaseless information about their whereabouts and strategic manoeuvres.

Worse still, the expeditionary forces encountered deep valleys, the enemy's high gun-emplacement towers and barracks, blocking lines every step.

But can one ascribe the failure to the objective conditions alone? As the world knows, the Anti-Japanese Allied Army forces were responsible for the expedition. The Comintern, which ordered the line of the expedition, can also be said to be responsible in a wider sense. My personal opinion is that the Comintern committed a subjective mistake in the way it formulated the line and gave leadership to its implementation, and that the Anti-Japanese Allied Army forces, blindly following the line, carried out its operations blindly. In the last analysis, the Comintern's subjectivity and adventurism were the main causes of the failure.

Any line that is not accepted by the masses or that cannot touch their hearts will invariably fail to bring good results.

When we adopt a policy or a line, we go deep among the people and listen to their opinions in order to avoid committing the error of subjectivity.

When a man is affected with subjectivity, he becomes as good as blind. Some officials these days consider themselves the wisest of all and slight the opinions of their subordinates. They are grossly mistaken. Zhu-ge Liang was a renowned talent, but the popular masses are wiser and more intelligent than he was.

A line and strategy can be effective only when their validity convinces everyone. If not accepted by the masses, they are useless. The masses' hearts will fail to throb with excitement at anything that is not a just, correct and transparent line, still less in military operations in which the slightest error will bring disaster to all.

Even the enemy commented on the expedition as an ill-advised campaign.

"Making a careless estimate of the objective situation after the incident (the July 7 incident–Tr.) and judging it to be favourable to their guerrilla actions, they appeared to move audaciously from Dongbiandao... Jinchuan, Liuhe and Linjiang between the autumn of the year before last (1938) and the spring last year in a rash attempt to link up with the forces advancing towards Rehe from North China. However, confronted with a swift punitive attack by the Japanese and Manchukuo army and police forces, they moved back to the north and tried to establish a Red Area around the boundaries of Huadian, Mengjiang, Dunhua, Jiaohe, Fusong and Antu Counties; that is, in the white zone at the foot of Mt. Paektu." (*Thought Monthly*, No. 77, Criminal Bureau, Ministry of Justice, November, the 15th year of Showa–1940–pp. 136-137.)

The directives from the Comintern had much in them that did not suit the actual situation. Nevertheless, we approached each of the directives with care and tried to think carefully and act shrewdly so as to combine international and national interests while carrying out these directives in the context of our specific situation.

The more obstacles there are standing in the way of the revolution and the more complex the situation is, the more firmly do we maintain the consistent principle of adhering to an unrestricted line of our own and of acting independently. As was the case in dealing with the Comintern, we have always combined an appropriate balance of independence and internationalism in our relations with our neighbours.

That is why I can say that we have been able to lead the revolution straight to victory.

I still believe that our position and actions with regard to the Rehe expedition were right.

In autumn 1970 I paid an informal visit to China, at which time my Chinese hosts gave a banquet in Beijing in celebration of the founding anniversary of our Party. The banquet was also attended by one of Wang Ming's erstwhile colleagues from the Comintern.

I told the Chinese cadres about how many twists and turns the Korean revolution had gone through because of pressure from those around us and

about the torments the Korean communists had experienced–more than anyone else–because of the prevailing circumstances. I pointed out that a large number of Korean revolutionaries had been sacrificed during the anti-"Minsaengdan" campaign, and that in the latter half of the 1930s especially we had suffered great losses in strengthening the KPRA and developing the anti-Japanese revolution as a whole because some people at the Comintern forced upon us a line that did not at all suit the situation.

At this, Zhou En-lai remarked that Wang Ming was to blame for the mistake, and that Wang Ming had obviously done much harm not only to the Chinese revolution but also the Korean revolution.

Stalin also admitted that the Comintern had committed many subjective errors.

If the Comintern had not forced the Rehe expedition, we would not have left West Jiandao, and if we had not left West Jiandao, we could have dealt with the Hyesan incident and minimized the loss before it was too late. If our main force had stayed in West Jiandao, the enemy would not have dared to touch our revolutionary organizations even though they might have wanted to. When the enemy came to make its arrests, those who escaped could have evaded the roundup by fleeing to the mountains and joining our unit. Pak Tal, in fact, fled to the mountains and moved around in search of us, but was captured because he could not find us.

Many years have passed since the expedition to Rehe. My reason for referring to the expedition now is not to point the finger at who was right or who was wrong. Even if I were to point out who was wrong, there is no place to appeal to. There is neither a Comintern nor a symbol of authority at present. However, communists must learn a serious lesson from this expedition, which incurred so many losses because of subjectivism and blind actions.

History will never make a present of a good future to those who ignore the principles of revolution and act only through subjectivity.

6. My Meeting with Yang Jing-yu

From the moment he embarked on the revolution against the Japanese imperialists, the great leader Comrade Kim Il Sung stressed the importance of the joint struggle with the Chinese people and the internationalist ties with the Chinese communists, and made every effort to promote an anti-imperialist common front with the patriotic forces from various sections of the Chinese people. In the course of this, he came to know innumerable leaders, revolutionaries and military cadres of China.

Yang Jing-yu, a distinguished commander of the Anti-Japanese Allied Army of Northeast China, was one of the renowned Chinese revolutionary fighters with whom the great leader shared life in the shadow of death in the years of joint struggle against the Japanese imperialists. His recollections of Yang Jing-yu attest to his warm feelings of friendship towards the Chinese people and communists.

Yang Jing-yu, in cooperation with Ri Hong Gwang and Ri Tong Gwang, rendered distinguished services in raising and developing the guerrilla forces in southern Manchuria. The guerrilla army operating in southern Manchuria became the 1st Corps of the Anti-Japanese Allied Army, and the commander of this corps was Yang Jing-yu.

Throughout the anti-Japanese armed struggle we attached great importance to the joint efforts of the Korean and Chinese people and took great pains to keep up our alliance with different units of the Anti-Japanese Allied Army. All of this fully accorded with the interests of the joint struggle of our two peoples. This was also why we made two expeditions to northern Manchuria, fought battles in cooperation with Cao Guo-an's 2nd Division of the 1st Corps, and expanded our relationship with the fighters in southern Manchuria.

Since the southern Manchuria forces often requested reinforcements of

our troops, we sent them many military and political cadres whom we had trained with great effort.

This process strengthened our ties with the communists in southern Manchuria and deepened our comradeship with the military and political cadres in that part of China. Yang Jing-yu expressed through different channels his gratitude to us for our sincere assistance, and I sent my best regards for him occasionally through my messengers. In this manner, he and I continued to develop the friendship through our united struggle.

It was not until a joint conference of the military and political cadres of the KPRA and the Anti-Japanese Allied Army at Nanpaizi in autumn 1938 that I actually met Yang Jing-yu. Nanpaizi is a very eventful place.

In Mengjiang County there is a large forest called Paizi.

Paizi is characterized by a dense forest and an unusually large numbers of quicksands.

The anti-Japanese guerrillas used to refer to areas of muddy, treacherous bog in the forests as quicksand. A quicksand was usually overgrown with a variety of wild plants like tassel grass. If you stepped into one carelessly, you would be sucked down in an instant. You never knew how deep these quicksands were. There is also something like a quicksand in the grassland on the right side of the Monument to the Victorious Battle in the Musan Area.

The eastern section of the forest was called Dongpaizi, the western section Xipaizi, and the southern section Nanpaizi. We had military and political training at Dongpaizi in the winter of 1937, and held an important meeting with the cadres of the Anti-Japanese Allied Army at Nanpaizi to discuss the task of eliminating the aftereffects of the expedition to Rehe. The rugged terrain of Nanpaizi, with its innumerable quicksands that swallowed up men and horses in an instant, was an ideal place for secret meetings by our units. The meeting at Nanpaizi is also called the Mengjiang meeting because Nanpaizi belonged to Mengjiang County.

In the days before and after the meeting at Nanpaizi, our revolution was in a very complex and difficult situation. One aspect of the difficulty was the

enemy's constant offensives aimed at crushing our revolution, and the other was Left-adventurist scheming on the part of some officials working at the Comintern.

While directing their main efforts southward in China, the Japanese aggressors stepped up their "punitive" operations against Anti-Japanese Allied Army forces in Northeast China in an attempt to promote security in their rear. The enemy's dogged counterrevolutionary offensive was arresting the development of our armed struggle and the anti-Japanese revolution as a whole.

The evil effects of the Rehe expedition, caused by Left adventurism, were also crippling. Since the results of the expedition eloquently proved that the Comintern's directives were preposterous in that they ignored the actual situation, and since it was evident that the expedition had caused an enormous loss to the anti-Japanese revolution, it was clear to everyone that we should sort out right from wrong and remove the evil effects.

If we were to break through the difficulty facing the revolution, it was imperative for us to adopt a new tactical concept capable of defeating the enemy's offensive and take practical steps to wipe out the grim consequences of Left adventurism. For this purpose, the KPRA and the 1st Corps of the Anti-Japanese Allied Army decided to meet at Nanpaizi.

At that time I eagerly awaited Yang Jing-yu's arrival, for I knew that he had suffered the heaviest losses in the expedition and that he was having to come to Mengjiang through many hardships. Yang Jing-yu was also said to be impatient for the day of our meeting.

I sent some of my men out to welcome him and to guide his unit, and prepared adequate accommodations for them, as well as clothing.

When we finally met each other after so many hardships, we were both elated.

Yang Jing-yu's luminous eyes attracted my immediate attention. There is a saying that a person's eyes are worth 800 pounds out of his overall worth of 1,000 pounds, and I could see at a glance that Yang was a man of honesty and passion.

We chatted briefly over a small fire. After warming himself a little, he

casually broached the topic of the Koreans in the 1st Corps. He said that there were many Koreans in the corps, all renowned fighters, and that not all of them had been left alive to come with him. He lamented over and over the loss of these excellent comrades.

He was grieving over the death of his Korean comrades so deeply that I finally had to console him.

Yang and I were destined to fight in close cooperation against Japanese imperialism.

In southern Manchuria, Yang Jing-yu, along with Wang Feng-ge, commander-in-chief of the Liaoning National Salvation Volunteers, the army of the Broadsword Society, gained the reputation of a hero in the first half of the 1930s. They fought many battles and shed much blood around Dongbiandao.

After we occupied West Jiandao, the enemy put their names and mine on the same list. When Wang Feng-ge and his wife were killed by the enemy, the Japanese focused their attention on Yang Jing-yu and me. The Korean People's Revolutionary Army (also called Kim Il Sung's army by the enemy), and Yang Jing-yu's army were the two major armed forces to overwhelm the Japanese through their fighting efficiency in eastern and southern Manchuria. The enemy's top-secret documents often mentioned Yang's name and mine side by side, as did newspapers and magazines.

A Japanese expert on Yang Jing-yu's activities, when writing about Jilin, pointed out such details as "the street where young Kim Il Sung conducted anti-Japanese activities and was imprisoned", "the street where Yang Jing-yu stayed before he entered the guerrilla zone", while another article made a note on the map of Manchuria, across which the anti-Japanese movement was sweeping, "South Manchurian region where Yang Jing-yu and Kim Il Sung developed guerrilla warfare against the Japanese".

An article dealing with Yang Jing-yu's death said he was a leader of the anti-Japanese guerrillas whose name was well-known to the Japanese next to that of Kim Il Sung.

Another article in those days said:

"Kim Il Sung, a dyed-in-the-wool communist guerrilla, is a young man this side of thirty. ...

However, he seems to have about 500 men under his command, with hide-outs in areas beyond the reach of punitive operations, such as Linjiang, Fusong, Mengjiang and Changbai. His is the strongest force now in the area of Dongbiandao." (*Tiexin*, May issue 1937, p. 106.)

After the chat, I took Yang Jing-yu to the quarters we had set up for him. All the comrades-in-arms from the 1st Corps were surprised at the sight of the tents that had been pitched for them in good order. They could hardly believe that the tents had been arranged for them.

When we showed Yang Jing-yu to the tent for the cadres of the 1st Corps, he was deeply moved.

He said, "I have heard that you, Commander Kim, are hospitable to your guests, but I never dreamed of being accorded hospitality as warm as this in this valley, in this severe winter!" He hesitated to enter the tent. I told him to go in, have a sleep and break the fatigue that had accumulated for so many months, but he declined my offer.

He said it would be improper to take a rest before greeting the comrades-in-arms of my unit. It struck me then that he was no ordinary man. Many guests had been to my unit from our friendly units, but few of them had ever thought of greeting my men before they even unpacked.

Tong Chang-rong was the first to tell me about Yang Jing-yu. Apparently he had heard about Yang when he was doing Party work in Dalian. He said that miners at the Fushun coalmine followed Yang as they would their own brother.

When he was in my secret camp with his unit, Cao Guo-an, commander of the 2nd Division, also heaped praise on Yang.

When he was appointed secretary of the special branch of the Fushun Party organization, Yang Jing-yu, whose original name was Ma Shang-de, had gone among the workers under the assumed name of Zhang Guan-yi, saying that he had come from Shandong to find a job. In order to set foot in Fushun, where many people from Shandong were living, it was favourable to appear in the guise of a Shandong provincial.

Fushun coalminers wanted to strike against the Japanese owner, but they

had no leader who could champion their rights and interests. So they chose as their leader Yang Jing-yu who had a way of saying the right thing. Yang led the strike forcefully, but was arrested by the police.

Even in the hands of the police, however, he demanded the rights and interests of the working class and was outspoken about all that he believed to be right. He never once yielded to threat or torture. The underground organization and the miners finally rescued him from the enemy's hands.

I took Yang to the secret camp of my unit, as he wished. Our secret camp was located just beyond a ridge from the camp where the comrades from the 1st Corps were to stay. At the short notice I sent them, all my unit had lined up in front of the camp.

With tears in his eyes, Commander Yang said: "My entire unit suffered heavy losses in our repeated efforts during the expedition to Rehe, but you, Commander Kim, have kept your forces intact, thanks to your own sound judgement and correct leadership. By contrast, I have lost nearly all my men. I cannot hold back my tears when I think of my men, poorly fed, poorly clothed, without proper sleep, falling in their advance to Rehe. How much more honourable I would have felt had I come here with all of them together!"

I could not repress my own emotion at the sight of the tears he was shedding when he thought of his fallen men. Yang obviously loved his men dearly.

I gave a simple party in honour of Yang, who had come through so many hardships. A few glasses of brandy and some dry snacks were all on the table on this occasion. Declaring that he was undoing his belt for the first time in many months, he removed his pistol and field bag from his waist.

As he did this, So Chol, who had arrived with Yang, whispered to me that Yang had never done such a thing before and that he was breaking his own rule of always maintaining as neat and soldierly appearance as possible.

Although it was our first meeting, Yang talked a lot.

I was surprised to hear that he had once studied textile design at an industrial school. How interesting it was that a man, destined to be a

commander of the Anti-Japanese Allied Army, should have studied textiles! He said he had done this in the hope of some day beautifully clothing his fellow Chinese who had been so ill-clad and had lived in poverty for so many generations. I think this was an expression of his class consciousness.

Such class consciousness is the basis of a determination to commit oneself to the revolutionary struggle for the good of the exploited and oppressed masses.

Already in his school days, when he was a little over ten years old, he started resisting the unfair educational policies of the school authorities. This single fact is enough to show that he was unusually upright and had a strong sense of justice.

Yang Jing-yu came from Henan Province, not from Northeast China. He came to Northeast China, on assignment from the Communist Party, to do underground Party work and conduct an armed struggle.

At first he worked for the special branch of the Fushun Party organization, and then did underground Party work in Harbin.

In autumn 1932, when the Manchurian incident broke out and anti-Japanese armed units were being organized in various parts of Northeast China, he was dispatched to southern Manchuria as an inspector by the Manchurian Party organization of the Chinese Communist Party. He was sent there partly in consideration of the composition of the southern Manchurian guerrilla army.

The majority of the population in southern Manchuria were Chinese. In the early period of armed resistance, however, all of the guerrilla army here, formed at Panshi, consisted of Koreans. Its organizers Ri Hong Gwang and Ri Tong Gwang, as well as all the men, were Koreans. Because of this, the guerrilla army saw many difficulties in its early years. Made up totally of Koreans the army found it hard to seek aid from the people and find replacements among the people while operating in an area mostly inhabited by Han and Manchu people.

Among the comrades who had been sent to the guerrilla army in southern Manchuria was So Chol, who had been doing work for the Young Communist

League in Harbin with us. Although he was a Korean, So Chol was sent to the guerrilla army here as a medical officer, with instructions to act as a Chinese in order to serve as a liaison between the army and the people. The organization ordered him to behave as a Chinese towards everyone in southern Manchuria, except Ri Hong Gwang and Ri Tong Gwang.

Born into a slash-and-burn peasant family, So Chol had worked his way through medical college in Harbin. As a young intellectual he had a good command of the Chinese language as well as expert knowledge of Chinese customs, for he had lived among the Chinese from his childhood.

There are many anecdotes about how he joined the revolutionary ranks.

Once, while still in primary school, he was on his way back from pasture, where his cow had spent the day grazing. Suddenly, he was set upon by the police. The policemen leaped on him for no particular reason as he was coming home, riding on his cow's back. They pulled him down without warning and kicked him, snarling abuse and shouting that he was swaggering on the cow's back, getting in the way of the police, not even greeting them politely.

He is now a member of the Political Bureau of the Party in our country, but at that time there was no way for him to escape the beating. He suffered from injuries for months. From that time on he hated the police, as well as the landowners and minor officials who were in league with them.

Having fully accustomed himself to the land and the way of life in Northeast China, So Chol was the right man to play the role of a Chinese to help the southern Manchurian guerrilla army out of its difficulties.

He behaved like a perfect Chinese so as not to fail the expectations of the organization. He made no small contribution to enhancing the prestige of the Panshi guerrilla army and improving the relation between the army and the local people.

By the time Yang Jing-yu arrived at our camp in Nanpaizi, not many of his men had survived to come with him under his command. He told me the memory of the losses he had suffered in the Rehe expedition was breaking his heart.

He said his unit had not only shed a great deal of blood during the

expedition, but had also gone through terrible hardships on the march from Jian to Mengjiang. The enemy had pursued them without giving them a single moment to breathe, even using airplanes and heavy weapons, including artillery, against them. At one point the whole unit was surrounded by the enemy and fighting desperately for its life. They were being attacked from the air, Cheng Bin was shouting at them to surrender, and the enemy was tightening the noose around them, showering them with artillery fire from all directions. He had the feeling there was no way out. But the Korean soldiers in the 1st Corps, he said, were first-class fighters, and he praised over and over again Pak Son Bong's regiment and Pak Song Chol's company who had displayed their courage at this most difficult battle of Waichagou. He had been prepared for the worst at Waichagou, he said.

It was Pak Song Chol's company that played the decisive role in the battle of Waichagou, for all of Pak's company became human bombs and death-defying corps to break through the encirclement and thus rescue Yang Jing-yu's unit.

Had it not been for the Korean soldiers, Yang said, his entire unit would have been wiped out at Waichagou, unable to break through the encirclement. Had the Chinese and Korean communists fought separately, rather than as the Anti-Japanese Allied Army, he would not have been here in Nanpaizi with me, he declared, and heartily thanked us for the many Korean cadres we had trained and sent to him.

I seem to remember that we held the meeting at Nanpaizi for ten days or so.

In the course of it we analysed and severely criticized the Left-adventurist nature of the expedition to Rehe, as well as its grave consequences, and earnestly discussed measures to eliminate its evil effects.

We decided to move the KPRA forces to the border area around Mt. Paektu and to invigorate our military and political activities in order to counter the enemy's massive offensive. We also resolved to rehabilitate and improve the damaged organizations of the ARF, further activate mass political work, and adhere to the independent position in the revolution.

The meeting also reorganized the KPRA into directional forces, appointed their commanders and designated the theatres of their operations.

It is necessary that the historians should write about the political and military significance of the Nanpaizi meeting properly. I can say that this meeting, along with that held at Nanhutou, took a lion's share in strengthening the Juche character of the Korean revolution and the revolution in Northeast China. What is the Juche character of the revolution? It means carrying out the revolution independently, guided by one's own judgement and decision and in conformity with the characteristics of one's own country and its specific situation.

The meeting at Nanpaizi was another qualitative leap forward in the Korean revolution. All the officers and men of the KPRA were greatly encouraged at the meeting. The men's will, their endurance, was not the only factor that tided them over trials like the arduous march. They derived great strength from the spirit of the Nanpaizi meeting. That strength pushed me and my comrades-in-arms forward at all times in the course of the march.

At the Beidadingzi meeting in spring 1939, we reaffirmed the policy adopted at the Nanpaizi meeting and decided to advance into the homeland. Had it not been for the important policy adopted at the Nanpaizi meeting, it would have been impossible for us to trek across the snow-covered ridges and fields of Changbai to advance into the homeland and sound our gunshots in a situation where we were ringed by a dozen layers of the enemy. The roar of KPRA gunshots in the Musan area was the direct result of the meetings at Nanpaizi and Beidadingzi.

At Nanpaizi we organized a new Guard Regiment with my men for Yang Jing-yu and Wei Zheng-min, providing the regiment with large reinforcements. At that time we appointed some new commanders for them and gave Yang Jing-yu an orderly. The formation of the Guard Regiment deepened the friendship and brotherhood between the Korean and Chinese communists.

After the meeting at Nanpaizi, the units left for their theatre of operations. The farewell to Yang Jing-yu was as deep-felt as our first encounter. We pledged, on our honour as revolutionaries of the two countries, to emerge victorious by turning misfortune into blessings without fail. We also promised to meet again after victory.

To my regret, however, I never saw Yang Jing-yu again.

Having parted from us, Yang Jing-yu went on to conduct military activities in Huadian, Dunhua, Mengjiang, Huinan, Fusong, Jinchuan and other areas. His unit had to fight through many difficulties against the enemy's massive "punitive" offensive, staged in the name of a "special clean-up campaign for maintaining public peace in the southeastern areas".

I heard that the greatest of the difficulties he had to cope with was making preparations for the winter. Getting ready for winter meant a great deal of fighting. He intended to defeat the enemy's "punitive" offensive through dispersed action. We can't say that his decision was contrary to the principles of guerrilla warfare, but even a tactic that is correct on principle needs to be applied in such a way that it suits the situation. Otherwise, it may turn into a catastrophe. Battle situations are multifarious and constantly changeable.

Small units acting in dispersion can evade the enemy's observation with relative ease. Yang Jing-yu must have taken this factor into consideration and tried to combine the tactics of disappearing into nowhere and appearing from nowhere skilfully so as to defeat the enemy and break through all the difficulties that lay in the way of his unit. Apparently, however, his dispersed small units were unable to mass whenever necessary, as he had intended.

If you adopt only dispersed actions when you are surrounded by a large enemy force, you will find it difficult to destroy the large force of attackers. If you fail to destroy the enemy force, you will be pursued and fall completely on the defensive. Needless to say, the dispersed unit finds itself at a disadvantage when compelled to fight a large enemy force. Aware of the fact that Yang Jing-yu's unit was moving in small, dispersed groups, the enemy sent out even larger forces to the flank and rear of each small unit to destroy them. To make matters worse, Yang Jing-yu built secret camps and stayed there throughout the winter instead of carrying out mobile manoeuvres, with the result that he was unable to evade the enemy's massive "punitive" operations.

To my surprise, at the head of these "punitive" operations was Cheng Bin, who had been commander of a division under Yang's own command and who had surrendered. Cheng Bin became commander of the Tonghua police

force in January 1940. In an encounter with Yang's main force Cheng Bin had a six-hour battle with him at Xigang, Mengjiang County. In early February he, with the support of an additional battalion, had another clash with Yang's main force.

Yang Jing-yu died a heroic death in a pitched battle with the enemy's "punitive" force in a forest in Mengjiang County in February 1940. In the last hour of the decisive battle, yang had only his guards by his side and was surrounded by the enemy. The enemy shouted at him to surrender, but he kept shooting, exchanging heavy fire with the enemy until he feel, a pistol in each hand.

It was Ri Tong Hwa, the orderly we had turned over to Yang at Nanpaizi, that guarded the commander to the last moment. Ri Tong Hwa cast his lot with Yang Jing-yu and stayed by him to the end. We read the grievous news of Commander Yang's death immediately after the battle of Damalugou. A newspaper we captured from the enemy carried the news. The moment I read it, I lost my appetite.

In spite of the difference in our personal backgrounds and nationality, I shed many tears in secret when I thought of our meeting.

The enemy cut Yang's head off, photographed it and scattered the photos all over Manchuria from the air. They even ripped his belly open. Apparently they wanted to know what he had been eating in the wild mountains and how he could display such a superhuman fighting spirit. His stomach was said to have contained nothing but digested dry grass, roots and tree bark–literally no grain or food, just grass, roots and bark.

When sharing friendship with Yang Jing-yu at Nanpaizi, I lost Kim Ju Hyon, Kim Thaek Hwan and Kim Yong Guk, my most treasured and beloved commanding officers. That is why my memory of Nanpaizi is so painful.

After liberation, China renamed Mengjiang County, where Yang Jing-yu fell in battle, Jingyu County after him.

When the "Jingyu Tomb" was built in the town of Tonghua, China, for Martyr Yang Jing-yu, I sent a wreath to the opening ceremony in his honour.

In an article on the significance of the guerrilla war in Northeast China,

written by a leader of the Chinese Party after liberation, the author said that the three most arduous periods of warfare in the twenty-odd year history of the Chinese Communist Party were, first, the Long March of 25,000 *li*; second, the three-year-long guerrilla campaign by the Red Army forces remaining in the south after the main force of the Worker-Peasant Red Army went on the Long March; and third, the 14 years of bitter combat by the Anti-Japanese Allied Army in Northeast China.

The flag of the heroic war of resistance, fought by the Anti-Japanese Allied Army in Northeast China, is permeated with the blood of Yang Jing-yu, a stalwart communist from amongst the Chinese people. Our people will remember for ever the brilliant fighting exploits of Yang Jing-yu in the joint struggle against Japanese imperialists.

7. Grandmother Ri Po Ik

Grandmother Ri Po Ik's life occupies a special place in the history of the revolutionary struggle of her family at Mangyongdae, a family that gave birth to the respected leader Comrade Kim Il Sung and the great leader Comrade Kim Jong Il. Even after seeing all her children off on the road to revolution, she and her husband Kim Po Hyon stalwartly warded off the storms that battered against the wattle gate of her house, withstanding trials and misfortune. The mountains and snow-covered fields of Manchuria bore witness to her own bitter fight against the enemy.

In recollection of his grandmother, who devoted her life to the care of her children and grandchildren fighting in the cause of revolution, and who passed away quietly in a liberated land, the fatherly leader said:

After provoking the war against China, the Japanese imperialists launched a massive campaign for our "surrender". They inveigled into this campaign my former schoolmates, teachers, my friends and acquaintances, the people who had been connected with me in my days of the DIU[9] and who had become turncoats in prison, and anyone else they could get hold of. Finally, they even dragged my grandmother away from Mangyongdae and took her to Mt. Paektu, subjecting her to all kinds of cruelties. Using my blood relations as bait for their "surrender campaign" was their last resort.

Since ancient times our country has been known to its neighbours as a "nation of good manners in the east". Even Western visitors to our country in the olden days were unanimous in their opinion that Koreans were courteous, sympathetic, highly loyal to their country and dutiful to their parents. Some tsarist Russian scholars, who had travelled around our country in the closing years of feudal Korea, said in their report to the tsar that the Koreans were the most courteous nation in the world.

The enemy forced my grandmother to become part of their trickery in

their attempt to come fishing for us by using my filial piety to my grandparents as bait. The imperialist aggressors were totally devoid of humanity. They even twisted the Korean people's laudable customs and traditional ethics to carry out their crooked schemes. There was a precedent for this in the latter half of the last century, when invaders from the West raided the tomb of Namyon, the father of Prince Regent[10], in order to compel the Regent to yield to their demands for an open door.

I was operating in command of my unit around Mengjiang County when I got the news that my grandmother had been taken to the village of Jiazaishui, Changbai County, and was locked up there.

The enemy locked her up at night and dragged her around the mountains during the daylight hours, forcing her to shout: "Song Ju, your grandma is here! Come down from the mountains for the sake of your grandma!"

The message slips sent to me by the people of Jiazaishui included the text of the notices the enemy had put up in many villages: "Kim Il Sung's grandmother has come to Jiazaishui. He should come down from the mountains immediately to see her."

Travelling around large forests where guerrillas were likely to be encamped, the enemy threatened my grandmother and insisted that she call out my name. However, grandma was not a woman to yield easily to force. So she was treated cruelly. The enemy poked her in the back with their rifle butts as if she had been a criminal, threatening and coaxing her by turns, but all in vain. They just didn't know her. They thought that if one stamped a foot or glared at this old country woman, she would obey meekly. That was a gross mistake on their part.

The underground organization at Jiazaishui sent me word that my grandmother was in danger and that a rescue operation from my unit was necessary. If the situation did not permit the dispatch of my unit, they added, the organization would rescue her on their own, but my decision was needed for either choice.

The news left me in shock; my blood boiled and I shook with rage. Was it really possible that those wolves in human skin could drag about an old

woman in her sixties over the frozen wilderness at 40 degrees below zero?

In my resentment I felt an impulse to rush out at once and exterminate the enemy that was holding my grandma. But I repressed my anger and refrained from doing this. At that time the "Hyesan incident" had broken out and the revolutionary organizations in West Jiandao and in the homeland were undergoing terrible trials. Hundreds of revolutionaries were shedding blood behind iron bars. If I were to drop everything in order to save my own grandma first in that situation, how could I have the face to give leadership to the revolution?

If I had organized a battle, grandma could have been saved, but possibly at the cost of falling into the trap laid by the enemy.

Kim Phyong suggested that he in command of his small unit would save her, but I did not permit it. Instead, I persuaded him to hurry to the place where he was supposed to be carrying out his work of saving Pak Tal and other members of the Korean National Liberation Union. I can still see him wiping tears with the back of his fist as he left me.

After his departure, I, too, wept. The thought of grandma suffering at the hands of the enemy within only a hailing distance was hard to bear. I had not hesitated to organize battles to capture a few rifles or sacks of rice or to save a few patriots. Imagine my feelings as I had to sit there and fight against the idea of saving my own grandma from all sorts of cruelties at the hands of the enemy–and only a short distance away! To repress my burning desire to save her: this was my anguish as the commander of the revolutionary army, an anguish that I had to keep to myself. It was not easy to suppress my personal feelings this way.

All through my childhood I had basked in the exceptional warmth of her affection. This was one of the reasons I was barely able to keep my mental balance when I learned of her captivity from the letter sent by the underground organization at Jiazaishui. I cannot find the words to express the pain of my emotions at the time.

In my childhood and boyhood, grandma was no less dear to me than my mother. The childhood memory that made the greatest impression on me at

Mangyongdae involved a toffee peddler who carried a flat wooden box with toffee in it and who used to shout, “Buy my toffee, buy my toffee!” Sometimes toffee peddlers came with pushcarts in which they collected rags and worn-out rubber shoes. When they clinked their broad-bladed scissors to announce their arrival, all the village kids used to run out and gather around them.

At such moments, my mouth used to water at the thought of the toffee, but in my house we had neither money nor rags nor worn-out rubber shoes. In those days there were not many people in my village who could afford to wear rubber shoes. All my family had to wear straw sandals.

While the other children were chattering noisily around the peddler’s toffee box or pushcart, I stayed away, pretending to feed chickens in the yard or to watch ants crawling by the bean-paste jars inside the back wall. The elders in my family knew what I was feeling.

But one day grandma took out some of our precious rice from the jar and bartered it for the sweets. She put a few sticks of toffee in my hand, and I was quite overwhelmed, for I knew it was no small matter for the family that lived on gruel to sacrifice precious rice for a few sticks of toffee.

The gourdful of rice and the sticks of toffee that spoke of her love for me still float before my eyes today.

I don’t know why, but the memory of my being carried on my grandma’s back or Aunt Hyong Sil’s back in my childhood is more vivid than the memory of being on my mother’s. Even when going on a visit to her own parents’ home, grandma liked to carry me on her back.

A child of six or seven begins to know the world, and at this age a boy seldom rides on his grandmother’s back.

However, whenever she came to visit Ponghwa-ri, grandma used to offer her back to me, saying that she would like to see how much I had grown in the meantime. She did not care at all whether I was embarrassed or not. On her back I used to smell something of grass from her hair and summer jacket, and I liked the smell very much. This was a smell peculiar to old women who had spent their lives working hard.

When we were living at Mangyongdae, I was such a favourite of my

grandma's, I was practically monopolized by her. I spent my childhood mostly by her side. Her coarse arm was something of a pillow to me. I used to fall asleep easily on that pillow. Hugging me as I lay on her mattress, she used to tell me old tales that inspired me with the wings of fancy. Sometimes she slipped scorched rice or jujubes into my mouth, and I found them delicious.

After my father's death, grandma's affection for me grew even stronger. She found the joy of life apparently in my growth, in the growth of the eldest grandchild in her family. What else could ever have given her joy in life? Could she afford good food, or smart clothing or the luxury of travel? Her simple and earnest dream was to see her country independent. Her work and pleasure was to do all she could for her children, who were fighting for Korea's freedom, and to give them her loyal support while she waited for the day of independence.

Her love for me found expression mostly in her expectations of me and in her trust in me. In the summer of 1926, the year of my father's death, she came to mourn over his death in front of his grave at Yangdicun in Fusong, where she said to me:

"Jungson (grandson), you will have to take over the burden your father was carrying now. You must pick up the cause where he left off and win back the country, come what may. You may have no chance to take care of me or your mother, as is your filial duty, but you must give yourself heart and soul to the cause of Korea's independence."

I was deeply moved by her words. If she had told me instead to aim for wealth or a successful career, I would not have been as inspired.

She had nothing that shallow in mind. This means that her aim was very high, so to speak. Her words inspired me with great strength, for the fact that she entrusted me with the great cause of national independence was a sign that she had complete confidence in me.

She stayed at Fusong for some time, instead of returning to Mangyongdae. When we moved to Antu, she also stayed with us, consoling my mother and my uncle's wife.

My grandmother was, in short, a woman of strong will. She was full of a spiritual toughness rare for someone of her age. Very amiable and gentle as she was towards the poor and unfortunate and honest-minded people, she hated those whom she saw as not worthy of being called human beings because of the lack of their own humanity. She never yielded to any coercive power or injustice.

Had she been timid and weak-kneed, it would have been impossible for me to endure the shock of the news the underground organization at Jiazaishui had given me.

But I believed that grandma would understand my feelings and that she, though in captivity, would be able to withstand her misery and trials as the grandmother of a revolutionary. As it turned out, I was absolutely right in believing in her.

Pak Cha Sok, one of my mates at the Hwasong Uisuk School[11], came to see me at the secret camp at Nanpaizi. He was there just as we were holding an important meeting with Yang Jing-yu and other cadres of the 1st and 2nd Corps. His purpose was to persuade me to "surrender". Ri Jong Rak was also there after Pak Cha Sok left me. Pak Cha Sok honestly confessed his crimes to me, telling me of how he had dragged my grandmother around West Jiandao. It was he who told me she never once yielded to the enemy, just as I knew she wouldn't.

She was forced into what they called the "surrender hunting team". Ri Jong Rak and Pak Cha Sok belonged to this team, and their Japanese boss compelled them to drag grandma into the plot.

They went to Mangyongdae and began to wheedle my grandparents: "Don't you want to see your grandson? If you do, you can tell us, you know. He's been going through all sorts of hardships for nothing, he's going to end up ruining himself. If you want to save him you can, easily. Just do as we tell you."

Grandma retorted that according to the newspaper, her grandson was dead, so how could a dead man come back to life? She told them she hated listening to such twaddle and turned her back to them.

Ri Jong Rak, embarrassed, said, "The newspaper lied. Song Ju is alive

and continues taking part in the unsuccessful independence movement. He's having a terrible time in the mountains and he isn't getting any results. The whole Oriental world is now in the hands of the Japanese, but he doesn't even know the fact. He's living on raw rice and pine-needles on Mt. Paektu without a grain of salt, and he's covered with hair like a wild animal and his feet are worn down to dull butts, he's losing all his human shape. Because he uses the art of contracting distance, fighting and evading us, we can't bring him down from the mountain. The Japanese government says that if he comes over to them, they'll give him absolutely anything he wants, including the post of commander of their Kwantung Army or commander of their Korea Army. His family will, of course, live in luxury in a palace. So we must bring him around as soon as possible, and you, grandma, are the best person to do the job." He produced a fat roll of bank-notes, thousands of *yen*, and said that this was an advance. She could buy whatever the family needed with it and even hire a cook.

In a fury, my grandfather roared, "You despicable wretch, do you really expect me to exchange my grandson's life for money? Shut your mouth, you dog, and be off with you!" He pitched the money out into the yard.

Grandma told them she would not go to get her grandson even if he were to be put on a royal throne and that she felt heartbroken at the thought of the death of her sons Hyong Jik and Hyong Gwon. She then shouted at them to get out of her sight.

Ri Jong Rak and Pak Cha Sok were kicked out by her in this manner. Knowing that coaxing and bribery had no effect on my family the enemy took my grandmother to Manchuria at the point of a bayonet. She said, "You may take me along by force, but I won't help you. Instead, I will look around Mt. Paektu and Manchuria where my grandson is fighting against you, just to see who will be the winner." She was a woman of extraordinary nerve.

The agents of the "surrender hunting team" hauled my grandmother around the mountains of West Jiandao for nearly a full year. What torture it must have been for a woman on the other side of sixty.

Pak Cha Sok once consoled her when he saw that her feet had blistered.

He said, “Grandma, we are awfully sorry to have put you to this trouble. To tell the truth, I myself feel bad about this, and I’m doing it against my will. So how much more pain you must be feeling.” Apparently, he felt sympathy for her even though he had become a turncoat.

Grandma replied that although she was tired, she could feel strength welling up in her at the sight of her grandson’s battleground.

Whenever the enemy poked her in the back with a rifle butt to make her call out her grandson’s name, she retorted, “I don’t know how to blabber wild nonsense like that. Anyway, do you think you can kill me and get off scot-free? Go ahead, kill me if you want to end up with my grandson’s bullet in your skulls!”

The “surrender hunting team” was, in fact, quite aware of the fact that they stood no chance of success. They were constantly afraid of being attacked by the guerrillas. They knew only too well what sort of punishment was in store for them for dragging about the grandmother of the commander of the revolutionary army as a captive.

The agents of the “surrender hunting team” wanted to avoid the guerrillas’ fire by all means possible. They told grandma that they would “protect” her from a distance and that she should take along a boy of about fifteen as a servant while she looked for her grandson.

Having guessed that they were petrified with fear at the thought of retaliation, grandma snapped, “Why should I take along some poor boy with me? I’m already travelling with a bunch of fat-jowled thugs like you. If you’re hit on this nasty idea because you are afraid of the revolutionary army, I’ll tell that to your superiors.” The agents cowered under this bit of intimidation and were at her beck and call from then on.

She did as she pleased, even shouting at them. When the weather was cold, she said she could not go to the mountains because it was too cold; when tired, she said she must take a rest. If her bath was not warm enough now and then, or if she found a trace of it having been used by the Japanese, she berated the agents for her ill treatment, demanding what they thought of the grandmother of General Kim. If they served her with Japanese or Chinese

food, she demanded Korean food with great dignity. At such times they scrambled about, trying to please her.

On New Year's Day, the Japanese superintendent of the "surrender hunting team" told Ri Jong Rak and Pak Cha Sok that he would like to be offered New Year's greetings from General Kim's grandmother and ordered them to fetch her. Hearing this, she smiled coldly and retorted, "What nonsense! Tell the ill-bred fellow to come and bow his New Year's greetings to me!"

The superintendent was so shocked at her reply that he dropped his wine glass. Although he was a nasty brute who used to draw out his pistol and resort to cruelties at the slightest provocation until the offender begged for mercy, he was so overwhelmed that he dared not think of hurting her. Instead, he exclaimed, "Kim Il Sung's grandma is no ordinary woman. Her grandson is said to be the tiger of Mt. Paektu, so she must really be an old tigress!"

Pak Cha Sok confessed that he had felt reminded of his despicable treachery every day by her upright and dignified manner.

Finally giving up on their attempts, the "surrender hunting team" sent her back to Mangyongdae.

Hearing Pak Cha Sok's account of what he had seen and experienced with the "surrender hunting team", I felt a deeper respect than ever for my grandparents, as well as my heartfelt gratitude to them. When leaving the secret camp, Pak Cha Sok pledged that although he had switched sides under coercion, he would never again carry out such disgraceful acts against his country and nation, and especially against me, who was struggling with great hardship in the mountains.

I asked him to secretly convey a few roots of wild *insam* and a letter I had written to my grandparents. When I came back to the homeland after the country was liberated, I asked my grandparents if they had received my letter and the medicinal herbs. They said that they had received the letter, but not the wild *insam*. Apparently, the superintendent had pocketed it.

The grandparents at Mangyongdae kept the letter with care until Comrade Kim Il Sung

returned to the homeland after liberation. The letter was published in the newspaper *Jongno*, in its issue dated May 29, 1946, and thus came to the attention of the public. *Jongno* was the precursor of *Rodong Sinmun*.

The fact that Comrade Kim Il Sung had entrusted his letter to a turncoat instead of punishing or executing him is an event without precedent and attests to the magnitude of the leader's generosity. If Pak Cha Sok had a shred of conscience, he must have shed silent tears at the leader's magnanimity. That he had kept the letter to himself until he delivered it to the grandparents shows that he remained true to his pledge made at the secret camp.

It is fortunate, indeed, that the brief letter, which shows the stamina of the vivacious General in his twenties who was always firm in his optimistic belief in the triumph of national liberation and unswervingly loyal to its cause, has been published and handed down to posterity.

The text of the letter is as follows:

"I treasure your warm heart, Grandma.

"Since I as a man am devoted to my country, there is no need to tell you that I belong totally to the country and to the nation.

"Please set your mind at ease: the day I come back to you in joy is not far off."

Comrade Kim Il Sung's family at Mangyongdae were all moved to tears by the letter.

Later Grandmother Ri Po Ik was again taken to North Jiandao and subjected to all sorts of cruelties by Rim Su San's "surrender hunting team".

Her family, relations, friends and acquaintances, who gathered around her coffin after her death, said that the leader's eyes clouded in recollection of the incident.

I heard the news of grandma's second forced and tortuous travel around Manchuria when I was in the vicinity of Chechangzi, Antu County. The "surrender hunting team" consisted mostly of Japanese special agents. Rim Su San, who had been the chief of staff for our main force, also belonged to the hunting team. When surrendering to the enemy, he had pledged to his Japanese boss that he would capture me at any cost.

This hunting team first meant to take Uncle Hyong Rok as a hostage.

Probably they thought it would be useless to take grandma because she had not obeyed them the first time.

Uncle Hyong Rok was the only son remaining to my grandparents. When the enemy came to Mangyongdae and tried to drag him away, grandpa railed against them, beating the floor with his fists, and my grandma cursed the beasts that were trying to use her only son as bait to capture her grandson. She shouted that the wrath of Divine justice would be visited upon the brutes. My uncle also refused, saying that he would rather die than help them capture his nephew.

Finally, grandma was forced to go to Manchuria again. She was absolutely determined to show them that they would never break the will of General Kim's grandmother. She set out, ready to die in place of my uncle, and was taken around the rugged mountains of North Jiandao for several months, but she never yielded an inch to the enemy that time either. Whenever Rim Su San hurled abuses at her for not obeying the enemy, she flung back, "You have betrayed my grandson, but dead or alive, I am for my grandson, for Korea. I'll see how long you will live."

Hearing that grandma had come again as a hostage, I organized many battles. That was the best way of letting her know that I was hale and hearty and continuing to fight, as well as my way to send greetings to her, to convey all my feelings that could not be expressed in words.

Whenever she got the news that we had won a battle, she shouted in high spirits, "That's my grandson! Go ahead and destroy the Japanese to the last man in our land!" She did not care at all whether the enemy heard her or not.

The Japanese had no other choice but to take her back to Mangyongdae that time as well. After that, the enemy abandoned the idea of luring me by the use of a hostage. The result showed that grandma, without a gun and old as she was, had still defeated the enemy.

Nevertheless, the enemy's military and police persecution of my folks at home went from bad to worse as time passed.

Because it had produced many patriots and even the commander of the revolutionary army, my family suffered indescribable hardships for several

decades. In the closing years of Japanese imperialist rule, Uncle Hyong Rok got himself some simple fishing tackle and lived by fishing in the waters off Nampho, away from enemy oppression.

Grandma suffered the most in my family.

When I went back to my home for the first time after liberation, I said to her, “Grandma, you have been through a lot because of me.”

“My problems cannot be compared to yours,” she said with a bright smile. “As for suffering, the Japanese were the ones who finally suffered the most. I don’t think I suffered much. You went through all the hardships of fighting to win back the country, and the Japanese suffered while pushing me around. I got a lot of sightseeing done, and I owe it all to you. That was more like luxury than suffering.”

I apologized to my grandparents that I had come to them with empty hands on my first visit twenty years after I left home.

“Why empty hands?” she disagreed. “What a great present independence is! You’ve come home in good health, bringing liberation with you. What else could I wish for? You are great and liberation is great. What could be greater?”

Her words were too profound to be judged as compliments from a countrywoman who was nearly seventy years old. I was moved by her words and believed that she herself was really great.

I can say that it was a tremendous victory that at a time when Japanese military rule was at its highest she upheld her dignity and honour as the mother and grandmother of revolutionaries, without yielding to the enemy’s power and threats. In my country there are many patriotic grandmothers like mine.

I occasionally wonder how it was that grandma was able to stand up to the enemy so successfully and conduct herself so wisely and honourably, even though she was neither a communist nor a professional revolutionary, merely an old countrywoman who had never been to school, never received revolutionary education from an organization, never even learned to read or write.

I think that my family tradition and the revolution turned her into such a heroic woman. What do I mean by my family tradition? I mean that to my family the country and the people are the most precious in the world and that

they feel they must give their lives without the slightest hesitation for the good of the country. In short, it's their love for the country and the people, love for the nation. Grandma was greatly influenced by her children. She could not help being influenced by her sons and grandsons, because they were all committed to the revolution.

In a family whose children are devoted to the revolution, the parents tend to work for the revolution as well. If they don't actively work for it, they at least sympathize with the revolution, or help their children in the revolution. People often say that children with good parents will grow up to be useful adults because of their parents' influence. That is right. Likewise, parents who have intelligent children will be enlightened and awakened by them and will try to stay in step with them. For this reason, I always emphasize the importance of the role of younger people in revolutionizing their families.

Of course, one can't say that the children of revolutionaries become revolutionaries automatically. The influence of your parents is important, but you need to make your own efforts in taking up the cause of revolution. You must not dream of living off the work of your ancestors. I hope that the younger people in my family will always be at the forefront of the struggle to build socialism and to reunify the country, following the example set by their parents and forefathers who gave their lives to the fight for independence in our country. My grandma worked hard on her farm to the end of her life, and that was, after all, for the good of the country and for socialism.

Our strong guerrilla force was another factor that enabled her to win her fight with the enemy. When the enemy was "hunting for our surrender", the Korean People's Revolutionary Army was very powerful.

The might and reputation of the revolutionary army must have inspired grandma with strength. If we had failed to defeat the enemy in every battle after we had raised the revolutionary army, or if we had just maintained the status quo in our mountain hide-outs, unable to rally broad sections of the masses under the flag of a united front, she would have been unable to stand up to the enemy in such a wonderfully overbearing manner.

The same applies to the building of socialism. When the younger generations

work hard and grow strong, the country will be prosperous and the people will have a high sense of dignity and self-confidence. Dignity does not fall from the sky. Only when the Party is great, the leader is great, and the country is prosperous, will the people acquire a high sense of dignity and self-confidence. The younger generation must play the role of the main force in supporting the Party and the leader and work hard to build a prosperous country.

On June 9, 1946, the villagers of Mangyongdae, veterans of the anti-Japanese guerrillas and officials of the Party and administrative bodies in Pyongyang gave a party in honour of grandmother on her 70th birthday at Mangyongdae Primary School. The party was attended by Major General Romanenko of the Soviet Army, who was in Pyongyang. He made a congratulatory speech, following those of anti-Japanese revolutionary veterans and other guests.

Comrade Kim Il Sung arrived in Mangyongdae, unaware of the grand banquet being given for his grandmother's 70th birthday. He made a brief speech on behalf of his family as her eldest grandson, in reply to the heartfelt congratulations of guests from the different strata of society.

His speech, giving a brief summary of the seventy years of her life, was as follows:

"My grandmother is an old countrywoman who knows little. However, she did not in the least object to her sons, nephews and grandsons taking the road of revolution; on the contrary, she encouraged them. Having left her, these revolutionaries were killed by the enemy, locked up in jail, or went missing. But she never once lost heart. She was taken to Manchuria by the enemy and was subjected to all sorts of cruel treatment, but she lived up to her original principles.

"What does this mean? It means that although she did not know how to read and write, she fought through to the end with the strength of hope. She looked into the future and relied on her hope to the last. Her hope was finally realized. Korea's liberation on August 15 last year was the fulfilment of her hope.

"My grandmother lived to see that day and saw it at long last while she still lives.

"I hope there will be many more banquets like this, and I wish her a long life."

Grandmother Ri Po Ik died in October 1959 at the age of eighty three. Nearly 70 of those 83 years were stormy, a period of struggles against poverty, against injustice and against invaders. Her two journeys to Manchuria, forced on her by the enemy at the point of a bayonet, were times of painful suffering. She weathered these many decades of darkness to greet the day of liberation brought about by her grandson and to see a socialist paradise established in this land.

How was she able to survive the stifling age of darkness and live such a long life? The great leader Comrade Kim Il Sung, who witnessed the more than eighty years of her life, so much of which was spent in suffering, said:

Work was one thing that enabled my grandmother to live long. My grandparents worked all their lives. The ceaseless toil of my grandmother to feed and clothe her children hardened her both physically and mentally. People who carry out diligent physical labour in order to create something beneficial to community life usually live long.

Grandmother had a dream deep in her heart. She lived with a distinct aim in life and spent every day in a worthwhile manner. Her life might seem to have flowed on the current of events, but that was not the case. Every single step of hers had meaning and was directed towards her aim.

She lived all her life waiting for things. Before liberation, she waited for the day of national independence; after liberation, she longed for my return home; after my return, she craved for the day of happiness for all the people and the day of reunification. One who lives all one's life with expectations and hopes will enjoy longevity. Such people can withstand all sorts of trials with fortitude.

According to my experience, the revolution is carried out by people like her, people who have many dreams and high ideals. Dreams and ideals are the mothers of invention. My grandmother was full of dreams, and it is not too much to say that she owed her longevity to these dreams. Steadfast thought, unshakeable belief, strong will, a character full of dreams and diligence–these were the secret of her long life.

Although she was grandmother to the head of the state, she lived a simple

and clean life. After finishing the building of the Party and state on my return home, I intended to bring my grandparents to Pyongyang and live together with them. But they did not wish to come. To be candid, nobody would have blamed them if at their age they had lived in comfort under the care of their grandson. In our country we have an institution that accords good treatment to the families of revolutionary martyrs, and my grandparents were entitled to a comfortable life and preferential treatment.

However, they had no wish to live at the expense of the state. They did not want luxury bestowed on them by their grandson. They wanted to stay plain, ordinary people. So they continued farming until they died.

"People without work to do are miserable people," grandma always said. That was her simple philosophy.

Wishing to give some rest to my grandparents, who had grown old while working all their lives, I occasionally invited them to my home. Whenever they came, they asked for something to do. So I once gave them a cracked gourd to mend. Grandma said that the food cooked by her granddaughter-in-law was delicious and that it was lovely to embrace her great-grandchildren, but all the same she was bored to death without work to do. She could feel something start to burn inside her as soon as she was not treading on soil, she said, and went back to Mangyongdae in less than a week on each visit.

When we occasionally wanted to give her something to help her in her life, she declined the offer, saying we didn't need to worry about her. She told us to worry instead about the people. A premier is also a man, and why should I not wish to pile comforts on my grandmother, especially when I think of her so narrowly surviving all the cruelties she had suffered while travelling in the shadow of death? My honest wish was to give thick, cotton-padded clothes to my grandmother, who had lived all her life in thin clothing, and to take a few bottles of *soju* (Korean liquor–Tr.) to her on her birthday to wish her a long life. However, she even declined this simple offer.

Had I been an ordinary citizen, not Premier, I'm sure I could have done more for her. I could have cut trees with my own hands and built a tile-roofed house for her, taken her to the theatre to see *The Tale of Sim Chong*[12] and so

on, made sure that she lived in comfort the rest of her life.

Buried deep in state affairs, however, I did not get around to having cotton-padded clothing made for her. She lived in her simple, straw-thatched house until she passed away, a house handed down from my great-grandfather. I've had tile-roofed houses built everywhere and transformed the entire country, but I failed to provide my own grandmother with a new house.

I do not remember much I have done for her. The most I did was to buy her a pair of reading glasses. That was the only offer she did not decline.

As I hurried from east to west, dealing with state affairs, time flew by and my grandmother was suddenly gone. I feel great regret that I saw her off in this neglectful way. I feel I have not fulfilled my filial duty to either my mother or my grandmother.

If I had made good cotton-padded clothes for grandma in her lifetime, I wouldn't feel my heart aching so bitterly as it does today.

8. In the Forest of Nanpaizi

In the latter half of the 1930s when the anti-Japanese armed struggle was at its height, the Japanese imperialists stepped up their military offensive against the Korean People's Revolutionary Army, while at the same time doggedly pursuing a scheme they had cooked up to get what they had failed to get with guns. They figured that if they set in motion a "hunt for surrender" by sending traitors to the revolution as emissaries to the guerrilla army, they would be able to undermine the revolutionary fighters ideologically. They made turncoats and those who had dropped out of the revolutionary ranks their "surrender hunters". Among these stooges were some of the great leader's schoolmates and others who had had some connection with his revolutionary activities.

Whenever he referred to the meeting at Nanpaizi, the great leader mentioned Ri Jong Rak and Pak Cha Sok, his mates at Hwasong Uisuk School as well as his comrades in the days of the Down-with-Imperialism Union, for it was these two who had come to the secret camp on a mission to hunt for the great leader's "surrender".

I think I will touch in passing upon Ri Jong Rak and Pak Cha Sok who came to see me at the time of the meeting at Nanpaizi. They were my mates at Hwasong Uisuk School, and joined me in organizing the Down-with-Imperialism Union and the Society for Rallying Comrades[13]. They had also worked with me in raising the Korean Revolutionary Army. People working together for revolution over several years become bonded to each other as closely as if they were blood brothers. These two schoolmates were also my comrades in the revolution for four to five years.

Pak Cha Sok and Ri Jong Rak became my close companions a little earlier than Kim Hyok and Cha Kwang Su and other comrades in my Jilin days. When we were forming the DIU at Huadian, Kim Hyok and Cha Kwang Su had not yet joined us. Pak Cha Sok and Ri Jong Rak were the core

of the organization. I can say, therefore, that they were my earliest comrades and companions in the revolution.

It's a highly significant moment when people who were committed to a student and youth movement and an underground struggle happen to meet again after many years of forced separation. People who have been unable to hear from one another and have no idea whether the other was alive or dead because one might have been fighting arms in hand in the mountains while the other was locked up behind bars by the enemy–such people will have a deeply meaningful reunion.

To my regret, however, our reunion was not even pleasant, because Ri Jong Rak and Pak Cha Sok had come to the secret camp on a mission from their Japanese bosses to cajole us into "surrender". They came to see me not as old comrades of the revolution, but as marionettes of the Japanese under orders to bargain for my capitulation. That these erstwhile prisoners had undertaken such a bargain meant they had betrayed not only me but the revolution as well. Hence they could not be seen as honourable guests.

I found it a bitter experience to sit together with these old schoolmates who had betrayed the revolution.

I seem to remember it was in the latter half of the 1930s that the enemy launched their "surrender hunting" campaign against the Korean People's Revolutionary Army on a large scale and in a more atrocious manner than ever before.

In the early days the Japanese imperialists had not yet adopted "surrender hunting" as the basic strategy in their war against the anti-Japanese armed forces. They had concentrated all their efforts on armed attacks against the young anti-Japanese guerrillas and the Chinese anti-Japanese nationalist forces. They had not recognized or used or permitted any other method than the armed attack. They had concentrated only on the policy of the "punitive" attack. In this context, Japanese army headquarters had not even approved of "surrender hunting", probably considering such a thing to be childish and contrary to their *samurai* spirit. As a matter of fact, they had actually enforced a rule they called "strict prohibition of inducing surrender".

From this we can see that Japanese army headquarters had looked upon the anti-Japanese armed forces in Northeast China as a target capable of being destroyed by armed attack alone and countered us only by that means. No doubt it had boosted their confidence in their military capabilities when they saw Zhang Xue-liang's 300,000-strong army collapse overnight at the time of the September 18 incident.

However, their armed strike had failed to check the growth of the anti-Japanese guerrilla army and the development of the armed struggle against them. In these circumstances, the Japanese imperialists invented what they called "cultural punitive operations", by which they meant "rooting up basic evils", "ideological indoctrination" or "surrender hunting".

It is interesting to see what the Japanese imperialist aggressors had to say and to discover why they came to employ the tactics of "cultural punitive operations" which were supposed to "eradicate the basic roots" of the anti-Japanese armed struggle and "prevent the regrowth of these roots".

The *Thought Monthly*, published by the criminal bureau of the Japanese Ministry of Justice, has the following to say in its issue No.77 (pp. 139-41, November 1940):

"As for the reason why it is so difficult to punish the communist bandits, this is because the communist army burns with a fanatical fighting spirit based on communism. It uses cunning propaganda as well as guerrilla tactics expressed in phrases such as, 'We retreat when the enemy attacks, and we advance when the enemy withdraws.' It operates from the guerrilla zones, that is, dense forests in deep mountains, and wins over the people by means of clandestine propaganda activities. That is why it is understandable that armed punitive attacks alone are unsuccessful. ...

"Recourse to armed forces alone may be effective for a time, but will never eradicate the basic roots or prevent their regrowth; it will have no more effect than brushing away flies from food, or cutting off weeds at the shoot.

"In other words, the main reason for the failure to prevent them from acting as they please in spite of repeated punitive operations is that so far only armed efforts have been made. We have neglected the work of eradicating the basic roots, that is, ideological work, and have left the matter to the army alone, without enlisting the cooperation of all the state machinery."

While conducting “surrender hunting” on a large scale in the name of “cultural punitive operations”, the enemy pursued the policy of “wiping out bandits by using bandits”. They formed “punitive” forces with those who had deserted the anti-Japanese armed ranks and surrendered or defected to the enemy, putting them to work conducting “punitive” operations against their former comrades-in-arms, superiors and subordinates.

The fact that the enemy stepped up the use of such a non-military method as “cultural punitive operations” in the latter half of the 1930s is a clear indication of the total failure by that time of their one-sided policy of military action, a ploy they had considered unbeatable at that time. That was why they had to resort to the despicable scheme of “surrender hunting”.

In the 1937-38 period our anti-Japanese armed struggle was in full swing. Our force was very strong, and our battle results were brilliant. We could even attack a number of large walled towns without difficulty. Under the influence of the armed struggle, the mass struggle also increased in intensity. However, the anti-Japanese revolution, which was at its peak thanks to our unremitting efforts, suffered a tremendous setback with the expedition to Rehe. Yang Jing-yu’s 1st Corps and many other units of the Anti-Japanese Allied Army in Northeast China lost the bulk of their troops in the expedition. Deserters and defectors appeared among the anti-Japanese forces. Several commanding officers abandoned the armed struggle and surrendered to the enemy.

With these developments the enemy judged that the anti-Japanese armed forces in Northeast China were on the verge of collapse. They believed that we had been demoralized into a rabble and were divided among ourselves beyond remedy, and that one way or another, they could wipe us out.

I think that a few instances of success in their “surrender hunting” also stimulated their appetite for these “cultural punitive operations”. The surrender of some major commanding officers from our side left the enemy with the belief that there was a limit to the faith and will of the communists. With this assumption, the enemy undertook a campaign to demoralize the People’s Revolutionary Army.

The Japanese imperialists made the Korean People's Revolutionary Army the main target of their "cultural punitive operations" by intensifying the military offensive on the one hand, while on the other persisting in "surrender hunting".

Why did they direct their main "punitive" efforts at the Korean People's Revolutionary Army? Obviously, because the KPRA was their main enemy, having threatened the Japanese imperialists most dangerously all through the first half of the 1930s, and also because the KPRA was the strongest of the anti-Japanese armed forces in Northeast China, the most difficult enemy to destroy.

That was why the operations of the KPRA so often appeared in press reports. The news of our struggle even reached the United States.

An article published in *Sinhan Minbo*, a newspaper for Korean compatriots in the United States, reads in part:

"A detailed Tianjin news dispatch says that the most courageous and efficient fighting force among the Korean and Chinese volunteers is the Korean division under the command of General Kim Il Sung, a Korean. (According to newspapers in Japan and news from Korea, Mr. Kim Il Sung's armed force, operating from its base in Jiandao, crossed the border last June and attacked Pochonbo, Kapsan, to strike terror into the hearts of the Japanese army and police. The subsequent actions of his army were frequently reported by *Dong-A Ilbo* and other newspapers.)...

"They are solidly united and determined to share life and death with each other. Their unity is all the stronger because it is supported by a sort of systematic family rule and by traditional spiritual training leading to self-sacrificing cooperation, loyalty and courage. Under the Commander's orders the men will go through fire and water. ... Their aim is to destroy the enemy to save their nation, and their strategy is based mostly on guerrilla warfare–appearing from God knows where and disappearing to God knows where–to throw the enemy off balance.

"A Soviet military expert observed, 'If China and Japan declare war formally against each other, the Japanese will need 200,000 troops to cope with the volunteer forces in this one corner of Manchuria.' If this observation is reliable, then they are truly a great force." (*Sinhan Minbo*, September 30, 1937.)

The Japanese imperialists tried to wipe out the KPRA by resorting to military means, misleading propaganda and so forth, but they failed. They were literally helpless.

The more the enemy intensified their offensive, the stronger our forces grew, and the wider the news of our fighting spread.

Failing in both their "punitive" operations and their lying propaganda, the Japanese imperialists adopted the idea of "surrender hunting" because they were at their wits' end. How much they pinned their hopes on this method can be seen in the fact that they went and dragged out my grandmother for this purpose.

The enemy selected the main targets for their "cultural punitive operations" from among important persons. Their scheme was not simple.

Their scheme to "hunt for the surrender" of Yang Jing-yu was undertaken by the "Provincial Surrender Hunting Section", while the "hunt" for me was in charge of the "Central Special Surrender Hunting Section" that belonged to Police Headquarters under the Public Security Ministry of Manchukuo.

It was said that an official document of the Japanese imperialists existed dealing with their military and police attempts to use my teacher from my days of Fusong Primary School for the purpose of their "surrender hunting". But there was no instance of my teacher coming to see me or sending a message to me.

Pak Cha Sok and Ri Jong Rak appeared at the Nanpaizi secret camp in the midst of the enemy's "surrender hunting". When the enemy failed in their scheme to use my relatives, they sent my old schoolmates to do the job.

I guessed that the Japanese had sent Pak Cha Sok to sound out my reaction to their "surrender hunting" and that they had kept Ri Jong Rak for a showdown at the end.

Pak Cha Sok came to our secret camp when my unit was at Nanpaizi.

One day the security NCO at the guard post sent an orderly to notify me that a man, Pak Cha Sok by name, had come to see me. I was surprised at the news. He had been captured by the enemy while operating in the homeland in

the summer of 1930. I became suspicious of his purpose in coming to Nanpaizi from prison all of a sudden. Even if he had been released after serving his term, how could he, who had to be on the blacklist, evade the strict surveillance of the enemy and slip into this secret camp through double and triple rings of Japanese troops? If he had come all the way to work for the revolution again, I might have hoisted him on my shoulders and called for cheers, but it was not normal for the enemy to have given him such freedom. Despite my suspicion, however, I decided to see him, since he had come all this way. I also thought he could tell me how Uncle Hyong Gwon and Choe Hyo Il were getting on in prison, and many other things I wished to know.

I found a different man in Pak Cha Sok, although his appearance was the same as before. He was glad to see me as if he had met a member of his family from whom he had been forced to separate. But at the time, he looked dispirited somehow.

I asked him where his former high spirit had gone, and why he had become so timid. I told him to look into the future and pluck up his courage now that he had survived penal servitude.

He said, however, that he had become a turncoat in prison, and confessed in tears how he had become a stooge of the enemy and why he had come to Nanpaizi. While suffering in prison for several years after being sentenced, he had lost his confidence in the triumph of the revolution and had begun to waver. When he saw Uncle Hyong Gwon tied to a cross and being beaten he had completely lost his spirit to resist. Sensing that Pak Cha Sok was vacillating, the enemy had moved him to another prison. Releasing him before his term expired, they had forced him to switch sides and involved him in the “surrender hunting team”.

Pak Cha Sok was recruited by Jang So Bong specifically for the “surrender scheme” aimed at me. Jang So Bong, himself a turncoat, had distinguished himself earlier in revolutionizing Kalun, working together with Kim Hyok and Kim Won U when we were pioneering in central Manchuria. He was also arrested with Ri Jong Rak at the Changchun railway station in early 1931 while working to obtain weapons. The enemy put a geisha in his

service and made a home for them in Changchun, then went on to use him as their full-time special agent. As the Japanese espionage organization searched for people who had been closely linked with me, Jang So Bong recruited Ri Jong Rak, who in turn picked up Pak Cha Sok.

Pak Cha Sok confessed to me honestly that when interrogated by the enemy, he had owned up to all the details of his connection with me–that he had been close to me in our DIU days, how we had formed the Anti-Imperialist Youth League, what he had done in Jilin and its surroundings after the formation of the Young Communist League, how he had become a member of an armed group and how he had been sent to the homeland.

I asked whether he was doing this thing on his own, or on someone's orders.

He said that he had no official position, but was forced to come here by the Japanese. He added in tears–although he knew that such a trick would have no effect on me–that he had availed himself of this opportunity just to come and see me in person. I thought he told the truth when he said he simply wanted to see me.

Pak Cha Sok gave us several pieces of information we needed. He also told me about his journey to Mangyongdae to wheedle my grandmother into "surrender hunting". He was born in Pyongyang, and as a boyhood friend of Uncle Hyong Gwon's he often visited Mangyongdae to see my uncle. In the course of this, he had got to know my grandparents.

Pak Cha Sok said that Ri Jong Rak had informed the enemy of Pak's background and had suggested that Pak was the right man to play a big role in the scheme to "hunt" me. Pak said he deserved to be put to death a thousand times for the crime of dragging my grandmother around, but that he had taken care of her personal safety as best he could. He admitted that he and Ri Jong Rak were worse than beasts and said he wouldn't complain even if he were punished with death a hundred times.

When among us, Pak had had a keen sense of justice and had worked with great enthusiasm and ambition as a young revolutionary strong in his anti-Japanese spirit. After the formation of the Korean Revolutionary Army, he

had worked in a highly responsible manner.

When arrested and put in chains, however, his ideology degenerated and his human qualities crumbled. If anything at all remained of his old self, it was the thread of friendship that tied him to me.

Though on the payroll of the Japanese imperialists, he had not volunteered to cooperate with them, nor had he thought of gaining money from such cooperation. He had simply failed to foresee victory in the revolution because he thought Japan was too strong. He had thought himself lucky just to stay alive. The hunger for life had led him to switch sides, and as a turncoat he had had no other choice but to obey the Japanese meekly. Although involved in the "surrender hunting" scheme, he was acting against his will.

Having to obey the will and orders of the Japanese imperialists in spite of hatred for them was the tragic lot of a man like Pak Cha Sok, who had abandoned his revolutionary convictions.

Seeing Pak Cha Sok, I thought deeply about genuine human qualities. He had grown older, but the look of his face had not changed. And yet he was a different man. His shell remained, but it seemed empty. He had lost his soul. I have to say that it's a man's ideology that makes him a real being. What can remain of a man who has lost his ideology? An empty shell. Once your ideology crumbles, your personality will also crumble. Pak Cha Sok became a soulless man because he had abandoned his ideology. Such a man's face looks like the face of one who has lost his sight.

In spite of my knowledge that Pak had degenerated, I explained things to him and advised him from various angles, with the feeling of pulling him back from the enemy's grip. This was my reaction to the enemy who had deprived me of my old comrade. I wished to revive at least his love for his country, although it might be impossible to bring him back to the Pak Cha Sok of his days in the DIU. My heart also retained some of my old friendship towards him.

I said that a man guilty of crimes against his nation could neither live nor die like a man. Pak Cha Sok affirmed that it was true. He went on, "With my surrender to the Japanese imperialists, living itself has become a nuisance, my daily existence is a torture. What is the use of living like this? I have

made up my mind to die, but I have no courage to kill myself. Seeing you and talking to you today lightens my heart, but I have no wish to live any longer. Please kill me. I wish to die at your hands."

"Would it make me feel better if I killed you?" I said. "Make a decent, fresh start with a clear conscience so as to atone for your wrongdoing. Do it for the sake of your moral obligation towards your old comrades in the revolution."

Pak said he would keep in mind what I told him.

To tell the truth, my comrades were all set to execute the turncoat, but I dissuaded them. Because he had confessed and repented honestly, I wanted to treat him humanely.

I feasted him on the meat of a wild boar my men had hunted down and drank few glasses with him. While sharing sleeping quarters with him at the Headquarters' tent overnight, I advised him to live like a man, and then sent him back.

He lived up to his pledge to me. He delivered my letter to my grandparents as I asked him to do.

Seeing him return safely from the secret camp at Nanpaizi, the enemy sent along Ri Jong Rak some time after. A small unit of the guerrillas who had been to Linjiang brought Ri Jong Rak back with them.

We had sent the small unit to Linjiang to procure clothing for the winter. While performing their mission, the unit met a trader who was a good wheeler-dealer. He was serving the Japanese and at the same time supplying goods to the guerrillas, benefiting from both sides. He entered into a bargain with our unit. He said he would offer the cloth and the cotton wool we needed if they agreed to take a civilian in the service of the Japanese army to Headquarters of the revolutionary army in return.

The unit leader agreed to the bargain on condition that the trader approach his superiors and let them suspend "punitive" actions for a while so that the bulky loads of supplies might be carried away without encountering trouble on the way. As a result, the enemy's "punitive" forces, which had been operating over a wide area ranging from Jiazaishui, Linjiang, to Nanpaizi,

suspended their operations and remained quiet for some time.

Taking advantage of this, the small unit was able to carry large amounts of supplies in safety to Nanpaizi. The civilian who came with the unit at that time was Ri Jong Rak.

Ri Jong Rak behaved arrogantly from the outset, earning the dislike of our comrades. Without showing any sign of fear and behaving with much imprudence in the camp of the revolutionary army, he laughed, talked wildly and carried on like a thoroughly thick-skinned man. On meeting O Jung Hup, who was at the entrance to the secret camp in charge of the guards, Ri Jong Rak offered a present of a watch to him, saying that he must be having a hard time in the mountain in the cold. O Jung Hup produced his own pocket watch and said he did not need another watch.

"Don't stand on ceremony, take the watch!" Ri Jong Rak insisted. "It's better to have two watches than one." O Jung Hup retorted that one should keep time by one watch, not by two watches–by a revolutionary watch one day and a reactionary watch the next. His words were a severe criticism of Ri Jong Rak's treachery to the revolution.

Although Ri Jong Rak behaved in a supercilious way from the moment of his arrival in the secret camp, I did not berate him for his crimes from the start. It seemed to me that friendship could not be slashed off at a stroke or burnt up at once. My old friendship with him was too deep for that.

Ri Jong Rak had been one of my closest friends in the old days.

In his days of the DIU he was a stalwart revolutionary with his own strong views. He was the most informed of us all on military affairs, and was responsive to new ideological trends. Around the age of sixteen he had joined the Independence Army and acted under the leadership of *Tongui-bu*. At that time he was strongly patriotic and acted in a bold, impressive way. He was a man of feeling.

We recommended him to a responsible post in the Korean Revolutionary Army, an expression of our great hope and trust in him. He was very popular among us. What a disappointment it was to us to hear the news of his becoming a turncoat, betraying our love for him and confidence in him! Ri

Jong Rak did not hide the fact that he was now a civilian employee of the Japanese army and belonged to its "surrender hunting team".

"Nothing would be better," he said, "than destroying Japanese imperialism, liberating the country and realizing communism worldwide, as the DIU programme said. However, that's all just a pipedream. When I joined the DIU and helped to form the Korean Revolutionary Army, and even when I was jailed, I believed that the ideal could be realized. However, the September 18 and July 7 incidents changed my mind for me. In Korea the communist movement has already been wiped out, and the motto 'Japanese and Koreans are one' has become an established fact. Japan has become the master of East Asia. There is a saying that whoever is in possession of the Central Plain (area to the south of the middle reaches of the Yellow River– Tr.) will rule the Oriental world. Look how the Sino-Japanese War is developing! Beijing, Shanghai and Nanjing have fallen, and the operations against Xuzhou and Wuhan and the attack on Guangdong have been successful. How can you cope with the invincible empire of Japan, which has swallowed up three provinces in Northeast China and has now occupied more than half the vast East Asian continent? Song Ju, you don't know how the general situation is changing, because you are always in the mountains. I came here to help you out of your futile suffering here in the mountains." He pretended to have come to do me a great favour.

His words and behaviour were proof to me that he was rotten to the core and that there was no hope of saving him.

In order to keep the enemy who surrounded us from disturbing us until we finished the meeting, I told Ri Jong Rak to send them a note. I dictated it to him, to the effect that on his arrival in the camp of Kim Il Sung's army he found that Headquarters had moved towards Mt. Paektu, that it would take some time to get in touch with it since it was many miles away, that he was approaching one of Kim Il Sung's units to get in touch with him and that they should wait quietly until further notice from him.

We sent the note, in Ri Jong Rak's handwriting, to the surrounding enemy and continued the meeting with calm and composure.

One day I said to him that he looked well, that his hands were plump and smooth, and that he seemed to be faring pretty well. He replied that he was living well on the payroll of the Japanese, and that he owed his good fortune to me. He said that because Kim Il Sung was a great man, the Japanese were trying hard to bring him round to their side, and for this purpose they had gathered his close acquaintances and old friends and were according them high treatment.

"If men like me are given such high treatment," he went on, "think of the honoured position you would hold if you came over to the Japanese! They are ready to give you, General Kim, whatever post you want, if you come round to them, the post of the commander of their Korea army or anything else you may ask for. You may administer Korea as their Korea army commander, or have Manchuria under your command here. You can do as you please. They want you to cooperate with Japan in either way. They say that in future the United States will most certainly extend its force to the west coast of the Pacific and try to gulp down Japan, Korea and Manchuria, and they want the Asian people to join hands with each other in containing and fighting back the United States for the sake of Asian co-prosperity."

The Japanese were very foxy. When they sent Ri Jong Rak to me, they knew that the word "surrender" would have no effect on me. So they told him to negotiate with me in terms of "cooperation" as a compromise.

The idea of Asian cooperation to contain the force of the United States was the expression of the doctrine of "great Asia" which the Japanese loudly advertised in those days. They fussed about building "a prosperous Asia for the Asians" under Japan's leadership. Who would be foolish enough to believe such nonsense? Their doctrine of "great Asia" was simply a cloak to hide their own greed for their monopoly over Asia.

Whenever they invade others, imperialists cook up a pretext to justify their aggression. The Japanese imperialists loudly preached the superiority of the "Yamato race" and spread the idea of a "world family", with Japan at its centre. When they were invading Korea, they said Japan would "take charge of this nation, which is incapable of independence, and lead and protect

them." When they were occupying Manchuria, they claimed to be exercising their "right to self-defence"; when they were fabricating Manchukuo, they fussed about the "concord of five races" and the construction of a "royally blessed land"; and when they were provoking the Sino-Japanese War, they shouted the mottos, "Punish the mobsters' land!" (which meant meting out punishment to China which had turned into a land of mobsters), or they talked about the "construction of a new China", and the "union of Japan, Manchuria and China".

As Ri Jong Rak persisted in preaching the doctrine of "great Asia", I said, "If we push into Japan, keep the Japanese under our iron fists and declare that we will enforce the doctrine of 'great Asia' under Korea's leadership, what will happen? Will the Japanese accept the doctrine as valid?"

I also asked why the Japanese, if they were really so invincible, had been suffering such a headache for so many years, unable to defeat the Korean People's Revolutionary Army, and why they were using such a childish trick as "surrender hunting" through a man like him instead of fighting honourably against us.

Ri Jong Rak could not give me a plausible answer to that question either. He said that it was probably because the Japanese meant to spare Kim Il Sung's life, there would be no other reason. He insisted that the strong defeating the weak was an immutable law of nature; that I should give up my idea of resistance, which stood no chance of success, and accept the Japanese proposal; and that if we continued our resistance, the three Japanese divisions that surrounded Nanpaizi in tight rings might destroy us to the last man by using poison gas or a new type of high-performance gun.

I declared that even if the Japanese were to make me their prime minister rather than merely their Korea army commander, we would continue fighting, and that even if they fired poison-gas bombs or high-explosive shells, the Korean People's Revolutionary Army would never yield to them.

He then went on to tell me about Han Yong Ae. When they were preparing the "surrender" scheme for me, he said, the Japanese intended to bring her into the scheme. But she flatly refused to cooperate.

Ri Jong Rak said that he and Han Yong Ae had been in the same prison in Sinuiju, and that she remained unusually loyal to me. By order of the Japanese, he said, he had asked her to cooperate in the scheme, but she rebuffed him. She had severely criticized him, saying, “I won’t do such a dirty thing. You shouldn’t either. Kim Song Ju is not a man to be fooled by a stupid ‘surrender’ trick.”

Hearing this, I felt thankful to her and detested Ri Jong Rak all the more. I told him, “See! A woman like Han Yong Ae refused to turn traitor and remains honourable. By contrast, you not only abandoned the revolution, you’re also acting as a Japanese dog. Shame on you! You’ve turned into a thoroughly vile person!”

Realizing it was impossible to persuade me, he tried to hook some of my men. He asked one of my guards if he had parents at home, and if he didn’t want to see his family. He tried coaxing him, saying that formerly the Japanese used to kill all the guerrillas they captured, but that now they would not only keep them alive but also give them a chance to start a new life. He suggested that if the guard wanted to lead a comfortable life close to his parents and with a handsome woman by his side, he should go with him, Ri.

Hearing about this, I gave up on him as a dog, a loyal servant of the Japanese. Unlike Pak Cha Sok, who was running errands for the Japanese against his will, Ri was serving the enemy of his own free will, not caring a straw about his country or nation.

At the unanimous verdict of my men, Headquarters branded Ri Jong Rak a traitor to the nation and executed him. We covered his dead body with a warning that traitors, whether they were my schoolmates or anybody else, would be executed in the same way.

My account of the interviews with Ri Jong Rak and Pak Cha Sok at Nanpaizi has been seen by many people as similar to a fictional story. If the event were described vividly, it would make an excellent story. It’s a rare real-life event in which a man who has pledged to share life and death on the road of revolution becomes a turncoat, spreads a propaganda about the strength of Japan and stresses the futility of resistance, then tries to get the

commander of the revolutionary army to turn traitor and join the enemy. This was one of my most extraordinary experiences.

Frankly speaking, both interviews cut me to the quick. If total strangers had come on such errands, I would not have been so bitterly hurt.

Both of them had been so spirited when we were forming the DIU. We all pledged to share life and death, none of our oaths portended treachery. However, the two people I loved most dearly and held in deepest trust betrayed me.

When the revolution is going strong, many people take part in the struggle and seldom waver or drop out of the revolutionary ranks.

But when the situation is disadvantageous to the revolution and difficulties start to crop up, waverers, deserters and capitulators appear. This is why officials must carry out ideological work properly among the people when the situation is grim and the country is in difficulty. True, people's ideology is not visible. Nobody has his ideology branded on his forehead, so it is hard to pick out waverers and defeatists who have lost their revolutionary faith. However, people's ideology will never fail to reveal itself through some aspects of work and life. Officials must do ideological work prudently to suit an individual's state of preparedness in order to consolidate his revolutionary faith.

What is the lesson here? It is that one's ideology must be made one's conviction. If it remains mere intellectual awareness, it will be of no avail. An ideology that is not also one's conviction is liable to degeneration. If one's ideology degenerates, one will become like Ri Jong Rak or Pak Cha Sok. So: if you acquire an ideology you think is just, you must make it your unshakeable conviction. Intellectual knowledge can serve as a genuine tool for creating that which is new only when it is supported by revolutionary belief. One's eyes see the present reality, whereas one's belief looks into the future.

If one's belief breaks up, one's spirit will die; and if one's spirit dies, one will lose all value as a human being. A person's morality and conscience are both based on his faith. People without faith cannot hang on to their conscience and morality, nor can they maintain their humanity. Only with

strong faith can they shape their destiny properly, remain loyal to their comrades and contribute truly to the Party and the revolution, to their country and their fellow citizens.

Comrade Kim Jong Il declared that loyalty must be kept as our faith, conscience, moral obligation and everyday concern. This is profound philosophy. I fully agree with this proposition.

CHAPTER 20

For a Fresh Upsurge of the Revolution

Arduous March

The Lesson of Qingfeng

The Salt Incident

Battle of Taehongdan

The *Tano* Festival at Yushidong

Women Fighters and Revolutionary Honour

December 1938–June 1939

1. Arduous March

When we talk about the Arduous March, we refer to the trek made by the main force of the Korean People's Revolutionary Army from Nanpaizi, Mengjiang County, to Beidadingzi, Changbai County, from early December 1938 to the end of March the following year. Over half a century has passed since the march, but our people still remember this epochal event.

The great exploits performed by the respected leader Comrade Kim Il Sung during this march and the indomitable revolutionary spirit displayed by the anti-Japanese guerrillas are a priceless heritage our people will pass down through generations as a source for their inspiration.

The following is the transcript of the great leader's recollections about the Arduous March, of an address he made to historians and writers.

You comrades have worked hard to create and disseminate systematic accounts of the revolutionary traditions established by our Party. Our writers have produced many literary works of great educational value that deal with the revolutionary traditions.

Over a long period of time I have been getting requests from you to tell you about the Arduous March. I shall take this opportunity to dwell on that event.

Late 1938 to early 1939, the time spent on the Arduous March, was our bitterest time of trial in the entire history of the anti-Japanese armed struggle.

The situation in those days was not suitable for us to advance into the homeland in a large force. Developments were so unfavourable to us that a man like Om Kwang Ho openly wailed that the revolution was on the wane. A large expedition to the homeland in these circumstances, in fact, involved a great risk.

Yet we ventured upon this expedition towards the Amnok River in order to push into Korea. Why? Because we wanted to turn the adverse

revolutionary situation in our favour. Merely worrying about the state of affairs was not a solution to the problem. If we had stayed put in a hide-out somewhere, we could, of course, have passed the winter in safety and preserved our force. Maintaining the status quo in that manner, however, was not the kind of attitude that would overcome the difficulties facing the revolution. This was why we decided to undertake the march towards the homeland, even though it would be arduous.

We knew that this was the only way to bring new hope and energy to the revolution.

In 1938 the people in West Jiandao and Korea were in low spirits. During the "Hyesan incident", many underground organization members were arrested and the revolutionary movement in the homeland got bogged down. On top of that, the enemy gleefully boasted that there was no more People's Revolutionary Army. The Japanese propaganda, though a total lie, had its effect on many people. Ominous rumours were so rife that people who normally did not believe the enemy propaganda were feeling apprehensive. Even renowned revolutionaries were losing heart and turning to Mt. Paektu for encouragement.

The enemy was in a much better position than we were to make propaganda, having a powerful mass media at their command. A plausible, shocking story that a KPRA unit had been annihilated at a certain time in a certain place, carried in a newspaper with a circulation of thousands of copies, would be read by thousands of people. The radio also gave out such propaganda, of course.

Our own "mass media" were only a few newspapers, magazines, handbills and written appeals, published by guerrilla units. Occasionally we used some materials printed by underground organizations in different provinces. What is worse, the circulation of these "illegal" publications was carefully monitored and very difficult. Simply scattering a handbill could easily cost the life of a patriot. An underground worker had to risk his life to go into Korea with a knapsackful of leaflets.

Advancing into the homeland and shooting off our guns there was the

best way to declare that the KPRA was still very much alive and to expose the enemy's propaganda lie that the KPRA had been destroyed. The sound of our gunshots would help set the underground organizations back on their feet.

A liaison man from West Jiandao told us that most of the underground organizations in Changbai had been destroyed. A lot of organization members had been arrested in Korea and there was no knowing where those who had escaped were hiding out, he said.

Listening to his report, I thought that even if the organizations were scattered, something might still remain of them, and that these remnants could be patched together to create new ones. So I decided to go to Changbai to rebuild them and then advance into the homeland.

Some people suggested that we hold military and political training in a secret camp during the winter, as we had done in Matanggou, and then launch new operations when warm weather set in. They said there was no need for us to take needless risks in the severe winter cold.

We did not accept this suggestion. How could we remain onlookers when the anti-Japanese struggle in the homeland was undergoing such severe trials? Hardships were nothing new to us; we had gone through them ever since we started the revolution. Had we experienced only a few, unheard-of problems up to now? How could we, the revolutionary army who had taken the cause of national liberation upon ourselves, merely look on with folded arms when the anti-Japanese struggle in Korea was in such trouble and the people were looking up to Mt. Paektu for help? We had to advance into the homeland, even if it meant living on tree bark and it might involve sacrifices and tribulations. Naturally, we would have to cut our way through a forest of bayonets and face enormous hardships on the way. Nevertheless, we would make big strides and strike the enemy. This was what I thought at the time.

This, then, was the motive of the Arduous March–to make the homeland seethe with renewed hope.

As you know, we made many hard treks during the anti-Japanese armed struggle. The march from Antu to Wangqing in autumn 1932, the march coming back to Jiandao after the first expedition to northern Manchuria and

the Fusong expedition in early spring 1937 were all difficult excursions.

However, the trek from Nanpaizi, Mengjiang County, to Beidadingzi, Changbai County, was such an unprecedented ordeal that it is beyond comparison with any other expeditions in terms of duration and misery. Because it took about one hundred days, this march is also called "the hundred-day march". To be exact, our journey took 110 days and was indescribably arduous, so it finally came to be known as the Arduous March.

I read many works about other treks in the past. I read the novel *Iron Flood* and watched its film version. However, I have never read anything describing a trek as full of twists and turns and beset with hardships as our march. In my secondary school days, as I read the *Iron Flood*, I wondered whether such a tough journey had ever really taken place. I was deeply impressed by Kojuh, who managed to break through one hardship after another. After I experienced the Arduous March, however, I thought Kojuh's trek was nothing compared to our march.

The Arduous March was, in a nutshell, a constant, non-stop struggle against the worst of natural conditions, hunger, exhaustion, diseases and of course the brutal enemy. All of these were accompanied by yet another severe struggle: that of not giving in to all these hardships. It was primarily a struggle to survive and to destroy the enemy. These were the main contents of the Arduous March. Indeed, it was a series of incredible ordeals and hardships from beginning to end.

That year the first frost fell before Harvest Moon Day[14] and after that the first snow fell heavily. Already early in winter rumour had it that a birch tree had frozen and cracked up in the severe cold.

Hunger and emaciation piled on top of the cold–and we had to fight several battles a day without rest or sleep. The hardships were beyond description.

Just think: It was only a five or six day walk from Nanpaizi to Beidadingzi, yet it took us more than 100 days to cover the distance! This was because we had to fight the enemy every single step of the way.

You have no doubt seen the map of the march route. What do you think

of it? You must have found it incredibly complex.

The Arduous March was a trek that dwarfed all previous expeditions just in terms of physical exertion and suffering.

What made this trek such an unprecedentedly horrendous one in the history of the KPRA? The enemy's continuous pursuit and encirclement and nothing else explains it. You cannot imagine how tenacious the enemy was in chasing and constantly surrounding us.

The Japanese imperialists concentrated all their "punitive" troops on our main force, sending all their forces out on the "punitive" campaign against Kim Il Sung's unit, the only force remaining now that the 1st Corps had been virtually annihilated. They whipped up their men's fighting spirit against us. They even used carrier pigeons for their campaign.

The enemy's tactic was quite simple: to deny the KPRA any chance to rest, eat or sleep. They hurled hundreds of troops continually against us, to the point where sometimes we had to fight 20 battles a day.

If we had slipped out of Nanpaizi, as we had done for previous expeditions, we would not have gone through such severe troubles. However, it was impossible for us to do this.

We had to let our gunshots be heard right from the start. Obtaining food for the march also required a battle, so we attacked an internment village as soon as we had left the secret camp. Having heard our fire, the enemy immediately tailed after us. Knowing where the 2nd Directional Army was moving to, the enemy did not leave us alone for a minute.

The Japanese, who had encircled Nanpaizi, started their pursuit at once. They moved very fast. As we were starting to prepare a meal after a forced march of 20 kilometres, they fell on us, so we could not cook, but had to repack our wet rice. This sort of thing was to take place frequently. Had it been a simple march without battles, we would have had nothing to worry about. It was the enemy's non-stop hounding and encirclement of us, as well as the ceaseless battles, that doubled our difficulties and made the march our worst trial yet.

Shortage of food supplies added to our problems. For several reasons our

food supplies had run out. In the autumn of 1938 we had stored up enough provisions for the coming winter, but we then consumed a large portion of the food during the meeting at Nanpaizi. The remainder was distributed among the units that left earlier for their theatre of operations in other directions. In the cold winter it was impossible to gather edible herbs or plants. If the enemy had not been so frantic, we could have hunted wild animals and eaten their raw meat. But firing between battles was disadvantageous for our activity. Only once did I allow hunting: O Paek Ryong had found a bear sleeping in a hollow tree and suggested shooting it. I said he might shoot if he could kill it at a single shot after assuring himself that the enemy was not nearby. He killed the bear, which was as large as an ox, with one shot. At the beginning of the march we had two meals of gruel a day. As the food ran short, we had just one meal a day. Finally we went without food altogether, only eating snow. Our vision became blurry and when we got up to continue the march, we felt dizzy and could hardly walk.

This is why, whenever I talked to cadres after liberation, I used to say that people who have experienced starvation know how valuable rice and peasants are and that no one without this experience can claim to know all about revolution.

One day O Paek Ryong went down to Qidaogou with my permission, raided a lumber mill and brought back several horses. Because our provisions had run out, we decided to eat horsemeat for our meals. We could not roast it in the enemy's encirclement and had to eat it raw and without salt. At the second meal our stomachs revolted. The raw meat caused loose bowels, which were even more painful than hunger.

In spite of their suffering from diarrhoea, the men continued to eat the horsemeat because that was the only thing they had. However, in four or five days, even the frozen meat ran out.

There are many short men among the anti-Japanese veterans because they did not get proper nutrition in their youth and because they had to go through all kinds of hardships. These factors stunted their growth.

When we were fighting in the mountains, we often had to do without

proper food, eating such things as wild herbs, grass roots, tree bark, malted wheat, rice bran, the residue left over from brewing and so on. We ate mainly coarse food at irregular times, so we suffered from all sorts of troubles of the digestive canal.

When Fidel Castro was on a visit to our country, he asked me how we had obtained food and clothing, where we had slept and how we had endured the severe cold of 40 degrees below zero during the anti-Japanese armed struggle. I told him how we had suffered hunger and the biting cold during the Arduous March.

He was deeply moved by my description. Apparently, he had not experienced hardships such as ours during his own guerrilla-fighting days. It is very warm in Cuba, unlike Northeast China or our country, and food is readily available.

When I was fighting in the mountains, I felt sorriest to see my comrades-in-arms unable to eat their fill, suffering all kinds of problems and unable to get married at their most marriageable age.

No matter how much I might describe the hardships we suffered during the Arduous March, you who have not experienced it cannot imagine what it was like. Let me tell you further about the difficulties of the march that followed.

From the very beginning the enemy used the tactic of "violent attack and tenacious pursuit". This attack and pursuit was so stubborn that we had to keep constantly on the move, chewing raw grain because we had no time to cook.

Their tactic was, in essence, the "*dani* tactic", which meant harassing the opponent ceaselessly by clinging to it like a tick. The Japanese word *dani* means "tick". With this tactic the enemy placed a "punitive" force at every single vantage point. As soon as guerrillas appeared, the enemy attacked immediately, and after the attack, tailed after them tenaciously in an attempt to annihilate them. The goal was to chase and strike the guerrillas continuously without giving them time to rest, sleep or eat until they were completely exhausted and destroyed. The enemy themselves could rest by shifts, but the guerrillas were compelled to fight without a breathing space, so

their tribulations were beyond description.

An old book on war says that an army caught by a long-distance pursuit by the enemy that comes in shifts will certainly be defeated, so that a good general will avoid such a trap. In other words, once in such a trap, there is no way out. Unfortunately we fell into such a trap. The enemy converged on us from every direction and clung to us like ticks. We found ourselves in a real predicament and had to develop elusive tactics to get out of it.

I racked my brains and thought out a new, zigzag tactic. I summoned the regimental commanders and said: “From now on, we’ll march in a zigzag; at every turn of the zigzag we’ll lie in ambush and pepper the approaching enemy with machine-gun fire. This is the only way to take away the Japanese ticks.” The zigzag tactic was the best way to strike the pursuing enemy in the Manchurian mountains covered with deep snow. That winter there was an unusually heavy snowfall, so that the men at the head of the column had to tramp down the snow to open a path. The snow was so deep that even the healthy ones among us were totally exhausted after advancing only fifty or sixty metres. In some places we had to roll bodily on the snow to make a path, and in others we tunnelled through. Where the snow was too deep, the men took off their leggings, linked them in a long line and held on while forging ahead. This prevented anyone from falling behind.

The enemy had no choice but to follow the zigzag we were making.

Bringing up the rear of the marching column, O Jung Hup would post two or three men with a machine-gun in ambush at every turn of the zigzag to hit the on-coming enemy. While the enemy was disposing of their dead, O Jung Hup moved his ambush to the next turn and beat the pursuers by the same method. Because the enemy had to take the single path we had opened, they could not avoid being struck each time. They were thrown on the defensive and suffered heavy casualties, whereas we took the initiative and dealt a series of heavy blows at them.

We continued the march through the heavy snow until we finally arrived at the end of Qidaogou, Changbai County, early in January 1939. Over the course of it we fought many battles, including the raid on the Yaogou

internment village, and the battle near Mayihe, in Linjiang County, and the raid on Wangjiadian. You probably know about them.

As the days went by the enemy poured more troops into its "punitive" operations. In their continuing pursuit their casualties increased, but they went on attacking us stubbornly with fresh replacements. Since the enemy had enormous forces in reserve, they thought nothing of hundreds of deaths.

My men walked, dozing, even dreaming. You can imagine how tired they were. As enemy planes frequently came to find our whereabouts, we could not build campfires either. The planes were similar to the plane we use now on Farm No. 5 for spraying agricultural chemicals. Anyhow they were planes. These planes flew over us every day and informed their ground forces of our location.

One day the enemy fell upon us, attacking our marching column in swarms. There were foes everywhere, in front and at our back, on both sides and even in the sky. The situation was so urgent that I ordered the machine-gun platoon to strike the enemy in front of us, the 7th Regiment to check the enemy attacking from behind and others to break through the encirclement sideways.

We managed to get out of the crisis in this way. We could do so once or twice, but it would be no good to have to walk this kind of tightrope all the time. Marching as a large force was disadvantageous in every respect. First of all, it was difficult for us to conceal ourselves. Next, obtaining food was a problem. The food dozens of men brought on their backs with great effort ran out in only a few days. Soldiers fell one after another, exhausted because they were fighting without eating or sleeping.

How were we all to survive and arrive in Changbai safely? After much thought, I decided to disperse our marching column. Not that dispersion would guarantee that everything would go well, of course. Other burdens and difficulties would no doubt result from dispersed actions.

Dispersing the entire army into several directions, I made up my mind to go with the 7th Regiment. But commanding officers present at the officers' meeting unanimously objected to my going with the 7th Regiment. They

insisted that Headquarters should go to the Qingfeng Secret Camp, the safest in the secret camps around Qidaogou. They were concerned about my personal safety, worried that if I went with the 7th Regiment, which fought the most frequently, I would be in personal danger.

I could not agree with them. I said that only the wounded and sick soldiers should be sent to the Qingfeng Secret Camp, and that our people needed a fighting Kim Il Sung, not a Kim Il Sung that sat in hiding with his arms folded. When I said this, they no longer objected.

In the end we decided to disperse our forces into three directions. Headquarters would go to Jiazaishui, via the Qingfeng Secret Camp, in command of the Guard Company and the machine-gun platoon, O Jung Hup's 7th Regiment advancing towards Shanggangqu, Changbai County, and the 8th Regiment and the Independent Battalion operating around Donggang, Fusong County.

We can call this dispersion the second stage of the Arduous March.

Today we remember it simply as a past event, but at that time our hearts ached at this parting. The comrades who were leaving me shed tears of sadness. They hugged the men of the Guard Company and earnestly requested them to protect me carefully. Their determination to safeguard me with lives moved me to tears as well. Some of the soldiers' uniforms were terribly torn, exposing their bodies, and the footwear of others was so worn out that they bound their feet with their leggings. Some soldiers used cowhide as foot wrappings. And yet they felt no concern about themselves, but instead worried about my safety. I could not help shedding tears because of this.

As I found out later, before parting from me O Jung Hup said he would lure away the enemy towards his own regiment, and told O Paek Ryong's Guard Company to avoid battle so as to get me to the Qingfeng Secret Camp one way or another.

The spirit of self-sacrifice and loyalty displayed by O Jung Hup to ensure Headquarters' security during the Arduous March is still fresh in my mind today.

From the moment he left Qidaogou, O Jung Hup fought one battle after

another to lure the enemy in his direction in order to draw danger away from Headquarters. Having disguised his regiment as Headquarters, he shouldered all the heaviest burdens. Because the Japanese thought this regiment was safeguarding Kim Il Sung, whom they were making such frantic attempts to catch, they naturally concentrated their heaviest attacks on the unit.

I was told that O Jung Hup's regiment fought ceaselessly to fool the enemy and ate nothing for over a week. At the time of our battle on Mt. Hongtou, hearing the sound of our gunfire, he had come running a long way to defend Headquarters.

Thanks to him, we were not harassed too much, and he scattered the enemy force that had been concentrating on Headquarters. But there was no way for us to obtain food and we marched towards Qingfeng with empty stomachs. At one point in the past we had sent supply-service men to Qingfeng to plant potatoes. I intended to give my men a few days' rest eating these potatoes if any remained. There was nothing to eat and we were almost starving to death.

Near Qingfeng we unexpectedly found a field of foxtail millet. Looking around the natural features, I recognized that this was the field where we ourselves had sown seeds the previous spring on the way to the Xintaizi Secret Camp. Apparently a man engaged in opium farming in a mountain valley had cultivated the field, and when we arrived there in spring, he had been doing his spring sowing. At the sight of our men he had run away. He took us for mountain bandits or Japanese troops, I think.

My men had been very sorry to see the owner of the field running away. We thought he might not come back because he was so scared, so we planted foxtail millet there. We felt we should not leave the field to lie fallow for a year, but sow seeds on behalf of the owner, who had run away because of us, so that he might have something to harvest in autumn.

However, the foxtail millet had remained in the field unharvested. The men were delighted to find the ears of millet in the snow. One man jokingly said that "God" seemed to exist in the world, because nobody but "God" could save us from the danger of starvation. Another man told me, "General, 'God', too, is now

on the side of the revolutionary army."

In fact, we did not benefit from the grace of God, but owed our salvation to ourselves. If we had not sown the seeds after the land-owner fled, we would not have made such a lucky find.

Whenever we arrived in a new camp, we made it a rule to break fresh land not far from the camp and plant foxtail millet, potatoes and pumpkins, then mark the field so that we could find it afterwards. Whenever we did it, my orderlies would ask, "General, will we be coming here again in the future?" They meant that such efforts were useless, since we would not be coming back.

I explained, "We may or may not return. Most probably we will not come back. But our liaison men or small units may come. If they can get potatoes or pumpkins when they are hungry in this desolation, think of how glad they'll be!" The routes taken by our units were named Route One, Two, Three and Fifteen. When I asked liaison men or small units on their return from a mission which way they had taken, they replied that they had taken Route Three or Fifteen, and so on. When I asked them if they had not suffered from hunger, they replied that they had picked pumpkins or dug potatoes from the field my unit had planted while camping on the march. They had boiled or roasted the vegetables.

Food shortages during the anti-Japanese revolution were so serious that we even consumed white-birch juice, which was used both as medicine and food.

We picked up the foxtail millet ears one by one from the snow, milled them and cooked them into gruel. We improvised our own treadmill for this.

About a week of millet-gruel diet gave us back our strength. But even the foxtail millet soon ran out. The only way to get food was to go to Qingfeng and obtain one knapsack of potatoes for each man.

On the way to Qingfeng we came to a river. We had to cross it, but it was not frozen. The mid-streams in steep mountain valleys do not freeze even in winter. We did not want to cross it by the bridge, because an enemy sentry might be guarding it, but there was no other alternative. Risking our lives, we crawled across the bridge one by one.

Hardly had we crossed when the enemy closed in on us and we had to fight. We quickly climbed the mountain on which the potato field was supposed to be. My plan was to contain the pursuing enemy while some men loaded their knapsacks with potatoes. But we discovered that neither the potatoes nor the hut that had been on top of the mountain remained. Apparently the supply-service men from the secret camp had dug them all up. The "punitive" force was almost upon us, firing machine-guns. It was a real crisis. I told my men, "We must get down through the valley to that moor. Then as soon as it's dark we can find a way out. The snow is awfully deep and we have no food; worse still, the 'punitive' force is still on our tail, so we have to disappear and get as far away as possible by a forced march along the road."

On the forced march we came upon a mountain rebels' hut. The rebels had fled, frightened by the sound of gunshots, and the hut was empty. There was plenty of food, including rib meat. Some comrades said that the food might have been poisoned by the Japanese, but it did not seem so. Playing-cards scattered on the floor showed that it was a hut belonging to mountain rebels and that they had fled in the middle of their meal. The heated floor was still warm.

The room was so cosy that if the enemy had not been chasing us, we would have slept off our fatigue. But we had no time to eat the rich food spread out on the table. At a guess, the food was enough for two days' rations for our Headquarters.

I ordered the men to pack it all up.

Hardly had we left the hut when the enemy caught up to us. It was a frantic pursuit indeed. We had no time to sit comfortably to eat a meat dumpling or a cracker.

One of the reasons our Headquarters was pursued by the enemy so hard was that a man surnamed Kim who had been engaged in underground work in Jiazaishui, was arrested by the enemy. He had joined the revolutionary army in Changbai after our move to West Jiandao. Before joining the army he had worked in an underground revolutionary organization, and in the army, too, he had fought well. For a few years he had fought among us before

being dispatched to a local area for underground work. On being arrested he had probably stained his honour by telling the enemy where we were going.

It was thus the enemy found out that O Jung Hup's regiment, which was fighting around the Changbai area, was false Headquarters, and so they concentrated all the "punitive" forces on us. Enemy planes, too, flew over our unit every day. Because the enemy attacked us from every direction, we had no room to escape. The men were pale with worry. O Paek Ryong, too, grew anxious, even though he had experienced all kinds of difficulties under my command since our days in Wangqing. The commanding officers, convinced that there was no way out of this trap, could only look at me with apprehension. A stirring speech was necessary in this situation. During a break, I summoned all of Headquarters and said,

"... Even the eyes of ten thousand people will not find a needle in a forest. If we use elusive tactics, we can conceal ourselves from the large enemy force, just as if we were a needle in a large forest. Admiral Ri Sun Sin defeated a large Japanese fleet with only a few warships in the naval battle of Myongryang. This turned in his favour the tide of the war against the Japanese in 1592. It was a miraculous success worthy of special mention in the world history of naval engagements. How did Ri Sun Sin defeat the enemy? Of course, his intelligence, tactics and courage contributed to the success. But an even more important factor was his love for his country. He knew that if the Japanese invaders were not destroyed, they would conquer his country and enslave his people. That was why he rose to the occasion and defeated the Japanese. Because of his ardent love for his country he was able to muster all his wisdom and courage.

"If we love our country, we also can break through this difficulty. Needless to say, our situation is grave, but if we have a firm confidence in the victory of revolution and if we do not give in to difficulties, we can reverse the situation. Let's continue our march with confidence."

When I finished the speech, my men said, "General, give us the order. We will follow you to the end." They resumed the march with brighter faces. I, too, felt more encouraged by their reaction.

On the Arduous March we used a variety of combat methods and tactics. We can say that the march was a testing ground for all the strategies and tactics that had evolved in guerrilla warfare.

Let me give a few examples of the flexible tactics we used.

To conceal the traces of our march in the snow, we filled up or erased our footprints before disappearing; we also slipped away to the side by treading only on fallen tree trunks. A most thrilling experience was to throw the enemy into chaos by disappearing off to the side so that their forces, closing in on us from the front and back, ended up fighting against each other. We called this the "telescope tactic". It meant that we made the enemy forces fight each other while we looked on from a safe distance. We used this tactic in Hongtushanzi, Changbai County, and on the Fuhoushui tableland to drive the enemy into a mess.

Hongtushanzi was a big mountain, the top of which was bare of trees. At that time, we marched around the mountain with the chasing enemy in our wake, and on the second round, when another enemy force appeared in front of us, we dodged away, picking our way across the fallen trees. The enemy forces came up against each other while one was in pursuit and the other in search of us. Mistaking each other for the revolutionary army, they fell into an exchange of heavy fire. The duel, caused by mistaken identity, ended in a tremendous life-and-death struggle.

On the Fuhoushui tableland, too, we used a similar tactic. A large enemy force was coming in our wake, but we had no way to throw them off, so we circled around the Fuhoushui tableland, as we had done in Hongtushanzi. During the second round, another "punitive" force appeared, this time between us and the chasing enemy. One round was a long enough distance to take us a whole day, so the two enemy forces pursuing us were out of mutual contact. It was a queer situation.

I had earlier ordered each of my men to cut a tree as long as a sleigh pole while on the march. Now we threw them across the tree stumps and slipped away to one side, using the poles as bridges over the stumps.

While we were taking rest under some bushes, wearing white capes and

chewing on raw barley, one enemy force closed in upon the other and they battled it out between themselves. We watched them calmly from a distance as they fought and killed each other in large numbers. Having suffered this rather foolish loss on the Fuhoushui tableland, the enemy later said in despair that we were so slippery, it was totally impossible to catch us.

We employed versatile tactics such as this several times a day, killing a lot of enemy soldiers. Still, the Japanese had a never-ending reserve of fighters. Japan's enormous supply of manpower was one reason they set up a clamour for overseas expansion, using the excuse of overpopulation. No wonder it was able to send ready replacements for lost "punitive" troops, no matter how many we killed off. By contrast, we who were fighting in the mountains had no immediate source of replacement, even for a single dead comrade.

After the battle of the Fuhoushui tableland, we did a forced march straight through to Jiazaishui, going all through the night.

When I ordered the march towards low hills, my men anxiously said, "General, there is a moor in that direction. We may land up in an internment village."

I said, "In this situation it is better to move straight to the hillock area than to stay in the forest. If we are chased ceaselessly like this, we'll end up totally helpless. The enemy replenishes its forces every day, but we can't. Only our casualties can increase. If one dies today, another tomorrow, and if our force continues to decrease this way, how many men will remain alive? Our comrades of the 7th and 8th Regiments may not be aware that we are in this tight corner, we can't send for them to help us, so there's no other way for us. We must advance to the hillock area and throw off the enemy in the forest. Because the enemy pays little attention to that particular area, we have to go in that direction to preserve our force and recover our breath."

As the saying goes, it's darkest at the foot of the candle, so the place near the village might well be the safest place for us.

We camped on a small hill that commanded a view of the village of Jiazaishui. The hill was dense with pine and oak trees half again as tall as a man. The hill was fringed with a cliff under which a stream flowed. The

sound of dogs barking in the village could be heard on the hill. Jiazaishui was also called a watermill village.

We relaxed and studied in combat readiness, making camp at night and striking it early in the morning. That was our first camping since we left Nanpaizi.

We rested ourselves for some time there. I often sat together with my Headquarters and discussed our future course of action and tactics with them. Our plan was to assemble all our scattered forces with the approach of warm weather after the lunar New Year's Day and advance into the border area and the homeland, striking the enemy everywhere and rebuilding the damaged organizations.

In the midst of all this, however, we ran out of food and again came close to starving to death.

I sent Ri Pong Rok, the political instructor of the Guard Company, to Jiazaishui. In this village the underground organization originally built by Kim Il was still active. An organization member called An lived there. He was a farmer with unusual connections to us. When his father was kidnapped by the mountain rebels, I had written to their chief to set him free. The chief owed us a favour from former days, so on receiving my letter he sent the farmer home. The farmer had been helping the revolutionary work under the influence of Kim Il, and after this event, he joined the underground organization.

I asked Ri Pong Rok to meet the owner of the watermill in Jiazaishui and try to get in touch with the farmer.

He went down the mountain and first met the watermill owner. He introduced himself vaguely saying that he had come down to find a human habitation because the enemy's "punitive" attacks were so frantic and the food problem was so serious. He asked if they could have a chat, even though it was late at night.

The owner coldly asked him whether he had come down to surrender. Ri said yes, to sound him out. The miller was very disappointed at Ri's reply and answered, "You must have gone through many hardships in the

mountains. However, you should not surrender. Once you take up arms to liberate the country, you can't just give up halfway, you have to fight to the end. You must not surrender, even though you have to endure severe hardships." And he asked if General Kim Il Sung was keeping well."

Ri Pong Rok replied that he did not know where the General was exactly, but that he was making strikes at the enemy in command of the revolutionary army. Having heard this the miller rebuked him, "It's not proper that you should betray the General by surrendering while he leads the revolutionary army in good health."

After this confirmation that the owner was a man he could trust, Ri admitted that he had not come to surrender, but had come down to obtain food, and that his comrades-in-arms were still up on the mountain. He asked the owner to help him obtain food, offering money.

The watermill owner said, "Buying it is dangerous. I will bury the grain in the heap of husks, the grain I received as payment for milling. You can carry it off in secret when no customers are around." The owner was really a good man.

While obtaining food in the village, Ri found out also that the watermill owner was a member of the Association for the Restoration of the Fatherland. He was on friendly terms with farmer An.

The organization in Jiazaishui had not been destroyed even after the "Hyesan incident" because our operatives had kept it secret.

When I heard about the watermill owner, I said to myself, "Very good! The people continue to support us as ever. As long as we enjoy support from the people we will win. Now there is a way out." The watermill owner was as good as having joined our Arduous March, carrying food supplies on his back. Had it not been for the food he provided, it would not have been possible for us to plan our future course of action with confidence or to relax by playing chess and similar games. We would in all probability have starved to death.

Not only the watermill owner but all his villagers helped us.

One day Ri Pong Rok asked for my permission to go to fetch food supplies, including those for the New Year Day party the villagers had prepared.

When I thought of my men having to get along, eating raw rice, raw meat or only water for so many days since we'd started the Arduous March, I had no mind to decline the kind offer of the villagers. I told the men to fetch the festive food, prepared with such warm kindness by the villagers. The prospects of being free from need on New Year's Day in 1939, thanks to the people of Jiazaishui, gave me some relief. My feelings of guilt at having to see my men go hungry seemed to be more or less eased.

Unfortunately, we were finally unable to accept their present: Ri Ho Rim, who went to the village with Ri Pong Rok, suddenly deserted. Ri Pong Rok returned empty-handed and reported to me that he had abandoned all the food because of Ri Ho Rim's desertion. It was the first time that a deserter had appeared among the Headquarters Guard Company men.

There had never been a deserter among them, no matter how terrible the conditions on a march. During the Arduous March, however, four men ran away from our ranks. They took off because they simply could not endure the terrible hardships any longer.

Ri Ho Rim had not served long in the guerrilla army, but I had loved him dearly. My love for him was special, for he came from Korea. He spoke Japanese fluently. When there was a need to reconnoitre enemy movements, I used to assign him to the task. He would take one or two men with him and climb telegraph poles to tap the wires. He was so healthy and knowledgeable that I singled him out for a future officer. Apparently he ran away because he had lost confidence in the success of the revolution.

His defection exposed us to great danger. We had to move out as soon as possible and take safety measures.

We decided to leave the hill behind the Jiazaishui village and pass through the vast plain in broad daylight. I ordered my men to march non-stop, whether the enemy came after us or not.

Dispersing our force to evade a large force of the attacking enemy was a general principle of guerrilla warfare. We maintained this principle thoroughly during the Arduous March. As a result, we were able to scatter the enemy force considerably. On this dispersed march, however, our

Headquarters with a small force went through many crises which threatened its very existence.

Why? It was because the enemy knew we were Headquarters and concentrated all their forces on us.

Learning a lesson from such experiences, we widely discussed tactics when reviewing the Arduous March at Beidadingzi. I emphasized that dispersed action was a tactic of guerrilla warfare to cope with a large attacking enemy, but that we should not apply it indiscriminately. Other commanding officers, too, asserted that for Headquarters to move alone separately without any support of a larger unit was an adventure that should not be repeated.

Reviewing the Arduous March, I keenly realized the truth that we should not commit dogmatism in applying tactics, even though they might accord with the principles of guerrilla warfare.

Immediately after we started the march in broad daylight, two other defectors appeared in our ranks. One was "Instructor Li", a graduate from Beijing University, introduced by Wang De-lin, and the other was a Chinese soldier. Worse still, there were many wounded men in the unit. For one thing or another, only a small number of men remained. If our unit decreased any more, it would be impossible even to relieve guards.

When I gave the marching order, O Paek Ryong asked, "General, if we start the march, the enemy's gun batteries will open up on us. How can we cross the open country?" I said, "Don't ask how! Keep one machine-gun in front and another in the rear. We must make a forced march. Shoot at the enemy wherever they appear, in our front or in our wake. There is no other choice."

Strangely enough, the enemy did not touch us as we moved out, just looked down at us from their batteries. Their main force had gone to the mountain areas for "punitive" actions and only a small force remained in the village. Moreover, the enemy was overwhelmed by the sheer audacity of our move. We crossed the open country in broad daylight without any disturbance and arrived in the forest. There we cooked and ate our meal and took a brief rest.

Perhaps people might call such experience good luck. After passing through the plain without the slightest trouble, we ourselves thought it somewhat strange. Naturally we had thought the enemy would fire, but they had not as much as sneezed, let alone fired at us, only looked down at us from their batteries. During the guerrilla struggle, we sometimes experienced such peculiar things, though not often.

After passing the plain safely, my men were delighted and said that "God" had helped the revolutionary army again.

When in a tight corner, take the plunge and ignore all danger as you fight. If you're unafraid of death, you will be able to break through any difficulty whatsoever.

As we were marching after coming out of the forest, I got the report that the enemy had appeared behind us. Apparently, the defectors had revealed our route, no doubt saying, "Kim Il Sung is leading a few dozen men after sending the large units in other directions, so you can beat him easily."

Shortly after, I received another report from the scouts that another enemy force had appeared before us. We were now in a critical situation, with the enemy closing in from both directions.

Looking me in the face, O Paek Ryong asked, "General, the enemy probably knows that we are Headquarters. What shall we do?"

I replied, "There is no other alternative but to fight to the death. The enemy before us is totally ignorant of our existence. They are not even aware that they're about to encounter us, so they will be off their guard. But the enemy behind us knows how many we are and how tired we are, so it'll be difficult to fight them off. Let one squad contain them and commit the main force to striking the enemy in our front. That'll open the way out for us."

The enemy chasing us was Japanese, and the enemy approaching us in front was a Manchukuo force. We knew the latter would be afraid of confronting us, so the enemy in our front was the weaker one.

"Strike the enemy ahead of us and open the way!" I ordered O Paek Ryong. "If they flinch, hit them without giving them a moment to breathe and chase them to their barracks to teach them a lesson."

O Paek Ryong set a machine-gun at the head of our column and sent off a running stream of fire at the enemy, then charged them, blowing a bugle. Having suffered heavy casualties, the Manchukuo army fled, throwing away their packs. Probably they thought we were a much larger force.

We collected the food and shoes from their packs and pursued them to a highway. In this way we also eluded the pursuing enemy and seized the initiative.

We now changed our tactics from escaping the enemy to forestalling them through attack. Constant and elusive escaping was no way to survive.

A book on war says that the best way to deal with a strong enemy is to parry his bayonet, harass him and wear him out, and when he wavers, attack him violently. If he retreats, pursue him hard enough to weaken him and turn the tide in your favour.

By employing these tactics widely during the Arduous March, we broke through many crises and seized the initiative.

I decided to attack an internment village to obtain food while throwing the enemy on the defensive. With the lunar New Year's Day just around the corner, I was eager to feed my men to their fill, the men who had gone hungry for so many months. Thus the battle of Shisandaowan was organized.

Before the battle we tapped the enemy's telephone line. An officer of the puppet Machukuo army, who had withdrawn to Shierdaogou, was reporting to his superior in Linjiang County. He said, "We encountered Kim Il Sung's unit. They attacked us so violently that we could not resist. We retreated to Shierdaogou. I expect your instruction about our action after this." He also rang up his colleagues in the neighbouring internment villages and warned them of our possible raids.

Based on this information, we attacked the closest enemy and another village and captured large amounts of rice and other foodstuffs. The supplies contained meat dumplings the enemy had prepared to eat. The loads were too heavy to be carried away, so we buried some of them in the snow and marked the spot. We feasted ourselves on New Year's Day.

The guerrilla struggle was not always one of constant hardships. Hunger

and poor clothing were our usual companions, but once in a long while we ate our fill and had a well-heated shelter.

After the battle of Shisandaowan, the enemy concentrated more "punitive" forces on our Headquarters. "Punitive" troops were everywhere. The enemy chased us so tenaciously that we had to pass a couple of nights on a height in temperatures of 40 degrees below zero.

Even in such difficulties we maintained the initiative and attacked another internment village. It was a battle to signal our location to our large units in dispersed action. I cannot remember the name of that village. On hearing the news about our battle, O Jung Hup's 7th Regiment, which had been in action around Shanggangqu, Changbai County, judged that Headquarters was in danger and attacked an internment village in order to draw the enemy forces. It also signaled their location to us.

The 7th Regiment came to Beidadingzi first to meet Headquarters and it was followed by the 8th Regiment and the Independent Battalion. The service units, which were in the Qingfeng Secret Camp, came to Beidadingzi as well. I called the roll and found that our strength remained much the same as when we had left Nanpaizi, Mengjiang County, in the previous year. Nearly all our fighters survived.

Our deep emotion at that time was beyond description. We experienced many partings and reunions during the anti-Japanese war, but I had never felt greater excitement than at this time. Beidadingzi was a scene of jubilation, as if we were holding a festival. The men, who met after more than one hundred days of hardship in the shadow of death, hugged each other or rolled over on the ground, laughing and talking like children.

The harder our trials, the happier our reunion. Comrades realize how dear they are to each other most when they are reunited after a separation. Partings and reunions between comrades who spill blood in a common cause strengthen their comradeship. Such close friendships do not break even in the strongest tempest.

The Arduous March was not a mere movement of our forces. It was a large-scale military operation that was equal to a campaign. It was the

epitome of our anti-Japanese armed struggle, so to speak. During this march we went through every kind of suffering a soldier could go through and experienced every kind of trial a man could experience.

Through the Arduous March we demonstrated once again to the world that the communists who took part in the anti-Japanese armed struggle were the true sons of the fatherland and the people, and that the revolutionary fighters were unfailingly loyal to their nation and to the cause of national liberation. Every anti-Japanese guerrilla that went through the march developed his character to the highest level possible. The noble image of the Korean communists formed in this event is a model that our people must learn and follow through the coming generations. The Arduous March created typical communists who defeated the enemy because they were rallied rock-solid behind their leader and did not relinquish their faith in any adversity. This was an important success in the Arduous March, as well as one of the great achievements of the anti-Japanese revolution.

All the participants in the Arduous March were heroes, whether they are still alive or dead.

There are many factors that led the guerrillas to survive their hardships and emerge victorious, like immortal beings. Let me tell you some of these factors.

First was their indomitable revolutionary spirit, the spirit of self-reliance, fortitude and revolutionary optimism. I can say that this spirit contributed to their triumph over all their difficulties. Going through the most terrible suffering, we never lost heart or became pessimistic, but endured all our miseries by picturing in our minds the day of victory. In short we were absolutely convinced of our eventual victory. If we had lost heart or taken a gloomy view of the revolution, overwhelmed by all the difficulties we faced, we would have sunk into the snow, unable to face our grave trials.

Another factor for the success in the march was our love for our comrades in the revolution. I still remember how I met O Jung Hup and his unit towards the end of the march.

He wrapped his arms around me and cried. I also shed tears when I saw

him. The joy of reunion with my blood relations would not have been so great as the joy I felt at that time. I was so glad that I could not get rid of the lump in my throat. I made up my mind never to part with these priceless comrades-in-arms again, not under any circumstances.

That winter I had worried myself sick after dispersing my comrades–I had never in my life missed my friends and companions as much as I did at that time. As many of you are discharged soldiers, you probably know how warm the love for one's comrades can be. No love in the world is warmer or stronger than love for one's comrades-in-arms and no moral obligation is nobler than the loyalty between them.

Revolutionary comradeship was an important factor in victory. It ran all through the anti-Japanese revolution. However, during the Arduous March the sense of moral obligation of our men was displayed more intensely than ever before. The anecdote of "a cup of parched-rice flour" was only one of many anecdotes about good deeds done in those days. One of my orderlies was carrying a cup of parched-rice flour in his pack as my emergency ration, but I could not eat it alone, so I shared it with my men, and this event has been handed down as a legendary tale to our children. This was not a rare instance.

Our men would have given their very flesh if their comrades had needed it, they were that willing to give their all to their comrades in the revolution.

As I mentioned once before, when Ri Ul Sol saw a recruit shivering with cold after his clothes were burnt while he was sleeping by the campfire, he took off his own padded jacket and gave it to the recruit. He went through a terribly cold winter in an unlined jacket, but he did not freeze to death. That was because his comrades, too, showed their burning love to him. We did not starve to death because we lived and fought in the spirit of sharing a cup of parched-rice flour throughout the Arduous March of over 100 days. Though we went through severe cold in worn-out clothing, our hearts were always warm. This was the secret of why nobody starved or froze to death and why all of us survived like immortal beings. The power of love defeated death.

This experience has convinced me that a community firmly united in comradeship will never perish.

Another factor that helped to bring the Arduous March to a successful conclusion was the people's love and support for us.

All through the march we received great help from such benevolent people as the owner of the watermill in Jiazaishui. You should not think that only our guerrillas took part in the march. The people, too, joined in. I would say that the people from Erdaohuawen and Yaogou who brought aid-goods such as rice, salt, shoes and cloth at the risk of their own lives participated in our march.

As we experienced on the Luozigou plateau and at the Tianqiaoling pass, the people saved us, helped us and became our companions whenever we were faced with a crisis. I was able to summon my courage because I was convinced that as long as we had such people, we would emerge victorious in this strenuous journey.

Our victory can also be explained by the fact that we applied flexible guerrilla tactics throughout the march to suit different situations.

Today we are still building socialism in a difficult situation. Our revolution continues to follow a rugged path, so we can say that we are even now continuing the Arduous March. In those days hundreds of thousands of the Japanese troops encircled and harassed us, but nowadays atrocious imperialist forces incomparably stronger than the former Japanese troops are trying to crush our country. In fact, we are living in a situation little short of war.

What is the best way for us to survive in this adversity? The only way is to display fully in our lives the same revolutionary spirit of Mt. Paektu that the anti-Japanese revolutionary forerunners displayed during the Arduous March.

Not only in the anti-Japanese war, but also later, in the days of building a new country, during the Great Fatherland Liberation War, and in the period of postwar reconstruction, we overcame all hardships and emerged victorious in the revolution by displaying the revolutionary spirit of self-reliance, fortitude and optimism.

Nothing is impossible for a people with as great a history as that of the Arduous March. No force can ever conquer the people who have inherited the history of this march.

2. The Lesson of Qingfeng

The books and textbooks that deal with the history of the anti-Japanese revolution mention two places of the same name–Chongbong (Qingfeng in Chinese transcription–Tr.). One is the Chongbong bivouac in Samjiyon County, Ryanggang Province, Korea, a historical place where the great leader President Kim Il Sung spent his first night while advancing to the Musan area in May 1939 in command of the main force of the Korean People's Revolutionary Army. The other is Qingfeng in West Jiandao, China, which the anti-Japanese guerrillas developed into a secret camp for the service units in the latter half of the 1930s.

Every Korean knows about Chongbong in Samjiyon County, but not many people are aware of Qingfeng in West Jiandao. The Qingfeng Secret Camp has entered the annals of the anti-Japanese revolution along with the Arduous March because a grave incident took place there that tested revolutionaries' faith and loyalty and taught the soldiers of the KPRA a serious lesson. This incident still teaches today's younger generation a great deal.

The following is part of the great leader's recollection of the incident.

At the start of the Arduous March, we sent the wounded and sick guerrillas to the Qingfeng Secret Camp for service units. There were many secret camps of this kind around Mt. Paektu and in West Jiandao. In the camp area our supply officers had already planted potatoes. The wounded and sick guerrillas were able to stay there in safety for a few months without worrying about food.

After the battle of Shisandaowan in 1939 I sent part of the enemy booty to the secret camp. In Qingfeng they had potatoes, but how could they celebrate the lunar New Year's Day with only potatoes? So I got special foods singled out and sent them to our comrades-in-arms in the secret camp.

A messenger from our unit went to the camp with the food. On his return he reported to Headquarters the surprising piece of news that an "incident of

a spy ring" had taken place in the camp. The staff of Headquarters were quite startled. If there really were a spy ring in the revolutionary army led by communists, this would be a grave matter indeed.

The messenger produced a letter from Ri Tong Gol, outlining the alleged incident, as well as a packet of "poison" seized as "evidence". Ri wrote that it had been exposed that the women guerrillas Kim Jong Suk, Kim Hye Sun, Kim Son and So Sun Ok were spies of Japanese imperialism and that they had attempted to poison our comrades-in-arms in the revolution. The messenger told us that in the secret camp he had seen the women guerrillas with their hands bound and showing evidence of torture.

The shock I got at that time was several times stronger than the one I experienced when Hunter Jang, Han Pong Son and other fighters had been charged with being "Minsaengdan" suspects. As you know, the issue of "Minsaengdan" was resolved finally at the Nanhutou meeting in 1936. From then on we hated to even mention the word "Minsaengdan" because the losses we had suffered from it were so great and the wounds it had caused were so deep.

And now a spy ring similar to "Minsaengdan" was apparently exposed in Qingfeng. What was I to think of this?

From the very moment I heard the news, I judged the incident to be cooked-up nonsense. The charge made by the officers against the women guerrillas whom they had labelled as spies was not based on any convincing evidence. The "poison" they had sent us as evidence was actually tooth-powder. Though my men tried to hold me back, I tasted it with the tip of my tongue and found that it was undoubtedly nothing more than tooth-powder. How absurd of them to allege that the tooth-powder was poison! The women guerrillas in Qingfeng had been trained and tested fully in revolutionary practice. They were single-heartedly loyal to the revolution.

Their sole ideal was to liberate their motherland. Why else would they take up arms in their tender hands, forgoing marriage and treading a difficult path wearing snow-shoes, eating grass roots and tree bark and enduring hardships that even men found hard, if it weren't for this ideal?

To label them as spies was not only far-fetched but insulting, ridiculous and criminal.

I will not dwell on what a woman Kim Jong Suk was. I could vouch for her without a second thought. Judging from her class origin and her fighting record, she had no reason whatsoever to collude with the enemy. It made no sense that this woman, who had lost her parents and brothers at the hands of the Japanese imperialists, would act as a spy for the enemy.

Kim Hye Sun, Kim Son and So Sun Ok were all highly prepared for the revolution. They were not the sort of people who would be taken in by wicked individuals.

It was preposterous to accuse them of spying.

What difference was there between this accusation and the reckless acts of Kim Song Do and Gao Ya-fan, who had branded so many people in Jiandao as “Minsaengdan” members and executed them?

In our unit there was not a single woman guerrilla who was likely to become an enemy spy. Neither in our days in the guerrilla zones nor after we had abandoned these zones was there a betrayer among the women guerrillas. Look for a woman guerrilla among those who deserted their comrades during the Arduous March: you will find none. Rim Su San, when surrendering to the enemy, took with him a woman he had been intimate with, but she did not spy for the enemy while she was a guerrilla.

Women in the army took greater trouble than men. Those people who appreciate the responsibilities women have in their homes today will understand what I mean. Though they work for society on an equal footing with men, they bear most of the heavy burdens of household chores. We have put forward a number of policies to relieve them of this burden, but our mothers, wives and sisters still carry it to a certain degree on their shoulders.

In the days of the anti-Japanese revolution, women guerrillas also worked harder. They took part in every battle and cooked meals in addition. They carried most of the cooking utensils and provisions. When the men guerrillas sank with fatigue and fell asleep around the campfire, women did the needlework to mend the torn uniforms of the men. Tears could be stitched up,

but burnt parts had to be patched. When pieces were not available, they cut the edges off their own skirts to patch the holes.

Seeing them doing this, I made sure the women guerrillas were supplied with two skirts each.

They overcame difficulties as persistently as men guerrillas. In some aspects, they were even more persistent.

By the way, I shall speak more about Choe Sun San. She is the wife of Song Sung Phil, a renowned worker of the arsenal. She was a veteran party member who carried out party activities underground in the Yanji area, worked as a cook in the guerrilla army and had been a part of the united front with the National Salvation Army. The fighters from Yanji were unanimous in their opinion of her as a responsible, tough woman.

After joining the guerrillas she worked as a cook for a long time. One day during break on a march, she pricked the palm of her hand with a needle while washing rice in preparation for supper. The broken tip of the needle went deep into the flesh, but she had no time to pick it out. She had to cook supper quickly so that the unit could resume march.

From that day she suffered sharp pains in her palm. An ordinary woman would have asked to be excused from kitchen duty for the time being, but this tough woman neither complained about the injury nor did she ask anyone to pull out the broken needle for her. When her platoon leader scolded her for a delay in cooking, she did not try to defend herself. She was aware that if she stopped cooking, another combatant would have to do it in her place.

Meanwhile, the needle tip worked its way to the back of her hand. Only when it popped out through the skin on the other side did she ask her comrades-in-arms to pull it out. They plucked it out with tweezers. This woman, who cooked for her comrades-in-arms for a fortnight, silently enduring the pain caused by the broken needle, is typical of the women fighters in our ranks who went through the flames of war against the Japanese.

I thought and thought, but I could not understand why these women fighters had been given the shameful name of spies. Om Kwang Ho, the head of the secret camp, had done political work for some years. How could he be

so rash as to suspect them without any grounds and accuse them of being spies? Didn't he know that the women guerrillas he had manacled and locked up in a log cabin were patriots, spotlessly loyal to the revolution? If these people were spies, as Om testified, then whom could we trust in this world?

I could not make out the real state of affairs from the written report of Ri Tong Gol or tell what was going on.

I called Kim Phyong, ordered him to go to the secret camp to investigate the case and then bring back to Headquarters not only all the arrested women guerrillas, but also Om Kwang Ho, the head of the camp, and Ri Tong Gol, political chief, who were said to have detected this "spy ring".

On his return I met one by one those involved in this incident.

What emerged was something surprising beyond imagination.

Om Kwang Ho was in charge of the camp. We had sent him to the service camp out of comradely consideration in order to help him to rectify some bad habits. He had been seriously affected with bad ideology and a bad style of work.

He had pernicious habits that should be avoided at all costs–the habits of a factionalist. Factionalists had a way of putting on important airs and looking down upon others. Being contemptuous of others, they ran their comrades down and found fault with them.

Factionalists are greedy careerists without exception. When they have no chance of promotion, they try their best to get promotion either with the backing of others or by resorting to trickery. That is why they are denounced as being ambitious. Om Kwang Ho was a man of this sort.

From the first day he joined the revolutionary ranks he revealed his ambitious streak. Having drifted into the revolutionary movement by the whirlwind of the May 30 revolt in the Yanji area, he worked as the political instructor of a company in the 1st Independent Division, but from the very start he earned a bad reputation among his men, for he gave excessive prominence to himself and constantly belittled his comrades-in-arms. No one likes a man who is self-opinionated and ignores his comrades and seniors in the revolution.

He attempted to turn the struggle against "Minsaengdan" into a springboard for his own promotion and branded many people as

reactionaries. His ultra-party phraseology rang loudest at meetings where "Minsaengdan" members were indicted and condemned. Though he had forsaken many of his comrades deliberately, the revolutionary organization did not abandon him; it pardoned him with magnanimity and gave him a chance to make up for his past.

When we were forming a new division around Maanshan, he called on me and pledged that he would rectify his mistakes by working faithfully. I believed him and appointed him political instructor of a company.

However, he betrayed my trust. He often shouted at his men and instead of helping out the company commander behaved like the cock of the walk by merely admonishing him. Conducting himself as if he were a retired veteran, he refused to put his shoulder to the wheel and do the hard work required. In the battlefield he did not fight in the first line, but hung about outside the range of enemy fire. He was not fit to be a political instructor who had to set an example for the masses and steer them.

For this reason, we dismissed him from his post and sent him to the service camp, hoping thus to give him a chance to correct himself.

When sending him to Qingfeng, I gave him the tasks of ensuring proper medical care and living conditions for the wounded and of growing good crops in cooperation with the supply-service men so as to build up food reserves for the unit. But he neglected the tasks. He did not build additional barracks either, which was another task given by Headquarters.

The wounded and sewing-unit guerrillas who had parted with us at the end of Qidaogou and arrived at the Qingfeng camp suffered great discomfort because of inadequate accommodations. They had to live in tents in the severe winter cold. Medicines and provisions were also running short in the camp.

However, the guerrillas, tempered as they were by hardships, did not utter a word of complaint. They endured all the difficulties, thinking of their comrades-in-arms who would be fighting bloody battles. They also strictly observed the daily routine of the camp and held regular study sessions.

As the saying goes, an awl hidden in a sack will pierce its way out in the

end. During the study sessions his harmful ways of thinking and his real self as a defeatist finally revealed themselves.

One day a debate was held in the secret camp on the policies adopted at the Nanpaizi meeting. Taking an example of the Russian revolution, Om Kwang Ho said, “Any revolution will experience a high tide and a low ebb. A high tide requires a high-tide strategy and a low ebb needs a low-ebb strategy. To meet these requirements it is necessary to make a correct judgement of the changes in the situation and be frank enough to admit the arrival of a low ebb when its indications are in evidence. If this is true, then which stage does our revolution find itself in at the moment? I would say it is at a low ebb. Look! The expedition to Rehe ended in failure and in the ‘Hyesan incident’ many revolutionary organizations were destroyed. Isn’t this a low ebb? In this situation we should learn from the lessons of ‘one step forward and two steps back’. In other words, we must avoid offensive and frontal confrontation and retreat until an advantageous situation presents itself. This is the way to save the revolution.”

He attempted to bludgeon all the soldiers in the camp into accepting this argument. Since the revolution was going through some twists and turns at the time because of the disastrous expedition to Rehe and the “Hyesan incident”, his argument might have sounded logical to casual hearers.

Nevertheless, the women guerrillas in the camp instantly felt that his opinion differed radically from the policy of Headquarters. They disproved his argument then and there. They asserted, “Of course we don’t deny the great influence the objective situation exerts on the revolutionary struggle. But we must not consider it absolute. The worse the revolutionary situation gets, the more revolutionaries must react to it and make redoubled efforts to turn a disadvantage into an advantage. This is the intention of the Comrade Commander. The Korean communists have continued fighting at all times, whether or not the situation was favourable. If they had gone into hiding when the situation was unfavourable and operated only in an advantageous situation, could they have formed such a standing armed force as the KPRA? Could they have advanced to the homeland, breaking through the enemy’s

tight border watch, and carried out such a daring military campaign as attacking Pochonbo? Marxism-Leninism is a communist theory, so it is, of course, a good thing to follow it in our revolutionary activities and practice. But as the Comrade Commander always emphasizes, we must apply Marxism-Leninism creatively to suit the actual situation of the Korean revolution, not mechanically. You seem to have misunderstood what 'one step forward and two steps back' means. Don't you know that the Korean revolution has advanced through manifold difficulties? You claim that it is best for us to retreat in the present situation; is there any rear we can retreat to? If we retreat, who will usher in the period of revolutionary upsurge for us? As the Comrade Commander declared at the Nanpaizi meeting, we must make headway against obstacles in the difficult situation. Thus, we must turn the disadvantageous situation into an advantageous one."

Kim Jong Suk led others in criticizing Om for his defeatist tendency. She fought without compromise against wrong ideas that ran counter to Headquarters' lines and strategic policies. She was a dyed-in-the-wool advocate of our ideology.

Under this counterattack by the women guerrillas, Om tried to rationalize his opinion by every means, even reciting this or that proposition of Marx and Lenin. The more he tried, the more offensive he smelled. His true colours as an ambitious opportunist were laid bare during the debate. Only now did the women guerrillas realize why he had idled away his time in the camp the whole summer without making preparations for treating patients or for wintering.

However, they did not brand him as a betrayer or a capitulationist. Since the debate was held during a study session, the matter would have been settled without trouble if he had admitted his fallacy and accepted the others' opinion with an open mind. We never made an issue of this or that misconception revealed in debates during study sessions. On account of the difference in their qualifications and level of preparedness, people differed from one another in understanding and grasping things and phenomena. No one can attain ideological perfection right from the start. One overcomes

one's ideological immaturity through studying and revolutionary practice, and in this process one is tempered and matures ideologically. That was why we did not denounce or criticize people whose opinions conflicted with revolutionary principles; we convinced them of the errors in their opinions by the method of argument.

But instead of accepting the women guerrillas' opinion as a just one and trying to transform his ideology, he started retaliating against them while trying to gloss over his own image as a capitulationist. His true colours were fully revealed in his persecution of them.

The crime he committed against them differed in no way from that committed by those involved in the "purge committees" during the anti-"Minsaengdan" struggle in Jiandao. His motive and purpose, however, were even more dastardly and insidious.

His attack on them was to cover up his own crime. In order to gag them, he resorted to the mean method of inventing a crime and making a false charge against them. He thought that if they were labelled criminals, they would not dare to touch him or report the matter to Headquarters. What a cowardly and dangerous way of thinking!

There was a young recruit in camp. One day he left his post without Om's leave. Making a fuss about him as a deserter, Om dispatched a search party. The party found the recruit eating potatoes he had baked near the camp. On their return they reported truthfully that he had left the camp, not to desert, but to bake potatoes and eat them, as he could not endure the hunger. The recruit was not yet used to hunger.

Om Kwang Ho, who had been looking for a chance to cook up an incident to startle the camp, branded him as a deserter. He went so far as to call him a spy, charging that he had made a fire not to bake potatoes but to signal the enemy. The recruit protested repeatedly against the charge, but to no avail. Om even tortured him, forcing him to confess what orders he had received from the enemy and whom he had turned among guerrillas in the course of carrying out his orders. How appalling it was of Om to brand the youth a "deserter" and a "spy" and put him to torture, the comrade he had shared

board with, even if the boy's act had not been particularly praiseworthy!

The young recruit Om had branded as a spy was highly class conscious, though he had not yet been trained fully. He had no reason to desert his comrades or to spy for the enemy. Despite this, Om tortured him until he made a false confession that he had coaxed the women guerrillas into performing "acts of sabotage" and attempted to kill his revolutionary comrades in the secret camp with poison. In the end Om detained the women guerrillas with this confession as grounds and inflicted violence on them without hesitation.

I could not see why Om, who for many years cried for unity in the ranks while conducting work with people, had come to this pass. Only through investigating his crime at a later date did I realize the motive of his sinking to such a degraded state.

When he was sent to the service camp, he saw himself as having been demoted. Unhappy with the Headquarters' decision to relieve him of the post of political officer, he did not perform the duty of supply officer but loafed about intentionally. After the debate with the women guerrillas, he made one ultra-revolutionary demand after another in order to cover up his stained reputation as a defeatist. On the pretext of keeping the camp well prepared for action he put it frequently on alert, tormenting the weak and wounded; on the pretext of economizing on provisions, he reduced two meals a day to one, starving them. The secret camp was not really so short of provisions as to be forced to eat only one meal a day. Rice was not available, but a considerable amount of potatoes was stored in a cellar. In the plateau in a forest not far away from the secret camp there was a fairly large field under cultivation with plenty of potatoes and cabbage. Had Om performed his duty faithfully, he could have provided enough food for our whole unit throughout the winter in Qingfeng.

From the moment he judged that the road to his promotion was blocked, he felt weary of the revolution. As the situation at home and abroad grew more complex and difficult, he began to see the future of the revolution as uncertain. This ideological malady was revealed at long last during the debate in the study session.

Ri Tong Gol, political head of the secret camp, was the only man who could have restrained Om from acting arbitrarily. As the political commissar of the 7th Regiment, he was Om's senior in rank. Since he had been wounded, we had sent him to Qingfeng on assignment to take charge of political work in the secret camp at the time we were switching over to scattered operations at the end of Qidaogou. But taken in by Om's flattery and trickery, Ri failed to see the nature of the incident. Had we not sent a messenger to the camp, Om could have carried out his plot to kill the women guerrillas.

While investigating the case, I realized that Om was a man more degenerate and wicked than even Ri Jong Rak had been. Ri's crime was committed after he was arrested and forced by the enemy to surrender. But Om became degenerate ideologically while he was still in the revolutionary ranks, and in order to cover up his own corruption he plotted against his comrades and maltreated them.

Except for the first half of the 1930s, when the guerrilla zones were in chaos because of the "Minsaengdan" there was no torture or punishment inside our ranks. Errors and defects revealed in the ranks were rectified through explanation, persuasion and criticism. Such an extremist act as an officer torturing his subordinates was inconceivable to us.

As his true nature came to light, Om regarded his relationship with his subordinates as irreconcilable–that of one person conquering another–and plotted against them without hesitation. He thought that if he was to survive, he had to kill them. To put his plot into practice he branded as a deserter and a spy the recruit who had slightly violated discipline and defined as poison the tooth-powder the women guerrillas had used. He went to the length of charging the women guerrillas, the owners of the tooth-powder, of being spies.

Om had conducted underground work with Kim Jong Suk for some months in Taoquanli, yet he was still vicious enough to stigmatize her as a spy. He knew only too well what type of woman Kim Jong Suk was.

The example of Om Kwang Ho shows that a man obsessed with careerism will become a villain who does not care a straw about his organization, comrades or moral obligation and who will betray the revolution. As Om confessed, he had

planned that if his plot against women guerrillas had failed, he would have run away in order to escape responsibility.

As we learned from Om's case, ultra-revolutionaries, extremists, double-dealers, those who criticize others in public while scheming with them in secret, capricious, disgruntled or self-opinionated people, fame-seekers and careerists always cause trouble in a revolution. Unless you take measures to deal with such people before it is too late, you will find yourself in a terrible mess.

Om's case also teaches the lesson that if a person fails to cultivate himself ideologically in everyday life, he loses confidence in the victory of the revolution and grows discontented and faint-hearted, yielding to even the most ordinary hardships. In the end he becomes a defeatist and does immeasurable harm to the revolutionary struggle.

The spy ring incident fabricated by Om was an unusual event that might have played havoc with our unity based on ideology and will, morality and ethics. This was why we of the Headquarters' Party Committee examined the case very seriously before putting it to the officers and men at a meeting held in Beidadingzi for mass judgement.

When the events at the Qingfeng Secret Camp were made public, all the officers and men unanimously supported the women guerrillas who had kept our line without yielding their faith in adversity. On the other hand, they demanded that Om Kwang Ho and Ri Tong Gol, who had failed to view the real nature of the incident with a keen political eye and had overlooked Om's crime, be executed in the name of the People's Revolutionary Army.

At first Om tried in every way possible to defend himself. Only after he was denounced by the masses did he admit his crime. He begged us to spare his life, shedding tears.

By contrast, Ri Tong Gol did not utter a word of excuse from the start; he admitted his mistake and asked for execution himself. He accepted the criticism of the masses open-mindedly and repented bitterly.

Ri was a man of strong will, warm heart and amiable character. He was efficient in both political and underground work. When appointing O Jung

Hup commander of the 7th Regiment at the Nanpaizi meeting, we appointed Ri political commissar of the same regiment, because we had a high opinion of his qualifications and experience in political work.

He made the mistake of playing into the hands of his subordinate because he was taken in by Om's flattery. This happened because he remained in his room and failed to get in touch with his men. As he had been wounded seriously, he must have found it difficult to go out among them, but even though he could not go outside, he should have called them to his room and had frequent talks with them.

If he had met even one guerrilla when Om was making a fuss about his "spy ring" he would have discovered the truth about the incident. However, he met no one after hearing the report from Om and left the latter to do whatever he wanted. When Om said he would interrogate a recruit, he told him to go ahead; when Om asked if he could detain the women guerrillas, he made no objection.

Ri listened only to Om, not to the other guerrillas, so he could not safeguard people's political integrity from the cunning plots of such an ambitious fellow as Om. This was the greatest mistake of Ri Tong Gol as a political worker. That was why all the officers and men put him in the same category with Om. Whenever a political worker stops breathing the same air with the masses, he will invariably land in this kind of mess.

Officials who deal with people's political integrity must not stop breathing the same air with the masses, not even for a moment. This means that they must pick up a spade when people take up spades, eat millet when people eat millet, and share everything with them. Officials who neglect their work among the masses do not understand people's feelings or mentality, their demands or aspirations.

Some of our officials overtly or covertly persecute those who criticize them, and depending on the seriousness of the criticism, toy with the political integrity of innocent people. Some officials are swayed by the words of a few flatterers and deal thoughtlessly with matters that decide the people's destiny. If officials abuse their authority and deal with people's political integrity as

they please, they incur people's resentment and hatred and thus divorce the Party from the masses.

Our Party carries out benevolent politics, and in our country every one leads a harmonious life in one great family, enjoying the benefits of the benevolent politics. Our kind of politics has assumed the mission of taking care of people's political integrity as well as their physical existence. Our Party values their political soundness more than anything else.

People with the same ideology and ideals get together and form an organization, a political party, and each of them acquires political uprightness in that collective. For this reason the political purity of the masses numbering in the millions immediately becomes the lifeline of the organization, the party. Therefore, dealing with people's political integrity improperly or tarnishing it reduces the life-span of the party. If the party is to remain strong and sound until it carries out its highest programme, it must work among the people efficiently and safeguard their political soundness. This is the lesson we must learn from the incident in Qingfeng. You must bear it in mind at all times.

Though his mistake was serious, Ri Tong Gol was a man deserving mercy. He made a mistake because he had forgotten his duty as a political head and had been fooled by Om Kwang Ho. He did not mastermind the plot but acted passively–siding with Om and overlooking his scheming.

Taking this into consideration, we simply demoted him.

As he was let off with a demotion instead of severe punishment, he called on me and insisted that the punishment was too light. He said, "I want to be given a heavier punishment. Please send me to the most dangerous place so that my mistake might be rectified at the cost of my blood and life. My comrades-in-arms will pardon me only when I shed blood and sacrifice my life. They will then call me their comrade as before."

Later he faithfully discharged the assignments handed to him by Headquarters. He was finally arrested by the enemy and hanged in Sodaemun prison on the eve of the liberation of the country on August 15,1945.

During the anti-Japanese revolutionary struggle he went by the assumed name of Kim Jun along with his original name.

3. The Salt Incident

In June 1949 the great leader Comrade Kim Il Sung presided over a small meeting of the Cabinet of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The topic of discussion was the cancellation of salt rationing and the free marketing of this condiment.

Recounting his experiences in the anti-Japanese armed struggle in his concluding speech at that meeting, he said that nothing was more serious than a shortage of salt and that the anti-Japanese guerrillas had done their best never to run short of salt, even though they might go without food. He said that since salt production had increased sharply and it had become possible to store reserves of it, unrestricted salt sales should be introduced.

Having adopted this measure, he told officials about the trouble he and his men had experienced because of a salt shortage during the Arduous March. This had come to be called the salt incident. The following is a selection of his accounts of the incident.

The salt incident I am going to talk about took place in the spring of 1939–the last days of the Arduous March. I still clearly remember the incident. One cannot live without eating salt. If you do not get enough salt, your hands and feet swell and you become so lethargic, you can't even move. Even grass-eating animals have to eat salt to live. Many fallen antlers are found in the vicinity of brine puddles in the mountains, as deer use these puddles as salt-licks.

Guerrillas experienced shortages in four essential consumer goods–food, footwear, matches and salt. If asked what was the most unbearable of the difficulties felt from the shortage of these essentials, the majority of the veterans of the anti-Japanese revolution would say that it was the lack of salt.

Salt was scarce in North and West Jiandao, and to make matters worse, the authorities strictly controlled its sale. This made the seasoning a rare commodity there. Salt was an item sold under a government monopoly in Manchuria.

The enemy strictly controlled salt-dealing so as to prevent it from leaking through civilian channels into the hands of the People's Revolutionary Army.

Peddlers smuggled salt from Korea and sold it secretly, making the rounds at residential quarters, but they didn't help people much. Many households in the backwoods of Jiandao boiled down wood ashes and drank the water as a salt substitute. In my days in eastern Manchuria I saw a family eating a grain of rock salt for a meal. When I was in Wangqing, I once went to Choe Chun Guk's company and asked Ko Hyon Suk what her greatest difficulty was in her work as a cook. She replied it was the shortage of salt. She had lived next door to O Paek Ryong before joining the guerrilla army to take revenge on the enemy who had killed her large family during their "punitive" atrocities. In the guerrilla army she was appointed a cook. Whenever I went to her company and had a meal, she was always very sorry not to be able to prepare good dishes for me.

When she served food not seasoned with salt, she was ashamed to face me, but stood by the kitchen range with her face flushed. She said that her family had had to get along with only a grain of rock salt for a meal as well. A grain of Chinese rock salt was the size of a kidney bean.

During our second expedition to northern Manchuria we were so short of salt that in some companies the men marched with a small emergency salt pouch attached to their belts. The pouch was as small as a seal case, about the size of a finger. The contents of the pouch was consumed only when salt was unavailable anywhere else. This might sound like a fairy tale to those who have not experienced this kind of shortage. Nevertheless, quite a few guerrillas lost their lives because they went to the enemy-held area to get salt, and many members of underground organizations were killed in the course of obtaining it. The main channel for getting salt was through underground organizations. When we gave them money, they set people in motion to buy it for us. Some of it was also bought and sent to us by people on their own initiative.

The enemy was well aware through which channels we acquired salt and how hard up we were for it. That was why they cooked up a vicious scheme to annihilate the People's Revolutionary Army by means of salt. They

calculated that they could capture or kill all the guerrillas without firing a single shot if they hatched a workable plot by means of salt.

They learned through experience that they could not defeat our army through military or political confrontation, so they resorted to "surrender hunting", the policy of internment villages and scorched-earth operations. They had also organized the "Minsaengdan" in order to destroy our revolutionary ranks from within through the wider international stratagem of driving a wedge between the peoples of Korea and China.

The Japanese attempted to prevent the news of our activities from spreading by even spreading the rumour of "the death of Kim Il Sung", boasting that Kim Il Sung had been killed at their hands and that with his death the independence struggle had now come to an end. In this way they tried to dampen the soaring anti-Japanese spirit of the Korean nation. Quite a few publications in Korea and Manchuria in those days carried plausible-sounding lies in the form of news flashes that I had been killed in such-and-such a way in such-and-such a battle. The *Kyongsong Ilbo* reported in November 1937 that the Manchukuo "punitive" force had succeeded in killing me after a fierce five-hour battle and that Kim Il Sung, who had succeeded his father in leading the anti-Japanese, anti-Manchukuo movement, had ended his stormy life at the age of 36 after being driven into a tight corner by the "punitive" force.

Tiexin, a magazine published by the puppet Manchukuo army, also carried an article about my death under the title, *Detailed News of the Punitive Operation against Bandits Led by Kim Il Sung*. According to the article, I had been surprised by the Manchukuo army in the vicinity of Yangmudingzi, Fusong County, and was killed with eight other guerrillas after a hard battle. The people from a nearby village had confirmed that the dead commander was Kim Il Sung. For this "exploit" a company commander of the 7th Regiment of the puppet Manchukuo army by name of Li received a special promotion, a certificate of merit and 10,000 *yuan* in prize money from the commander of the Kwantung Army and the Public Security Minister of Manchukuo. But as Kim Il Sung made his reappearance later, they said that their plan had hit a snag.

Japanese imperialists even conducted vivisection on Koreans and Chinese. What was their purpose in doing this? They aimed at nothing less than the destruction of the peoples and the revolutionary armies of Korea and China and the total extermination of all hostile forces that obstructed their domination of the Orient.

However, the enemy found that they could neither put out the flames of the anti-Japanese revolution nor wipe out the Korean People's Revolutionary Army, no matter what they did.

As things had turned out this way, the enemy, at their wits' end, attempted to do us harm by poisoning wells and bread, as well as the salt and cereals we bought.

As soon as we went to Changbai, we were nearly caught in by the enemy's trickery. After fighting a battle in Dadeshui and another one in Xiaodeshui in West Jiandao, we went to Mashungou and began making preparations to celebrate the Harvest Moon Day. One day the sergeant of the guard hurried to me and reported that an old man had come to the sentry post and wanted to see the Commander. The sergeant wanted to know what he should do with the old man. When I met the old fellow, he told me that the salt we had obtained in Changbai had been poisoned by the enemy. To confirm this, we fed the allegedly poisoned salt to an animal. It proved poisonous there and then. If the old man had not told us about it in time, we might all have ended up in big trouble. The more difficult our salt situation was, the more sinister became the enemy's attempts to exterminate us through poisoned supplies.

In the spring of 1939 we experienced great difficulties for lack of salt. At this time the regiments that had been conducting dispersed actions had reassembled and were moving with Headquarters on the last leg of the Arduous March. As the march was nearing its end, the guerrillas were in high spirits. By that time we had obtained food and the weather was warm. With the advent of spring every one was in a happy frame of mind. But one day I saw a very strange thing: the guerrillas were staggering around as if they were drunk. This would not have been a problem if only a few had been in this state, but it was alarming that there were so many. Their faces were swollen

too, some of them so puffed up that they could not open their eyes properly.

I decided the reason for this was a lack of salt. The serious swelling was all caused by the same deficiency.

The staff of Headquarters had not had salt for about ten days. I asked O Jung Hup when his 7th Regiment had last taken it. He replied that the regiment had gone almost entirely without it after parting with Headquarters. It was clear that salt deficiency lay at the bottom of the trouble.

I was horrified to see this sight just at a time when I was planning our advance into the homeland to strike the enemy after the conclusion of the march. We had to get salt, no matter how. Otherwise, the whole unit might be destroyed.

I looked for a man fit enough to go to the enemy-held area for this purpose. O Paek Ryong who was in command of the Guard Company recommended a recruit named Kim Pong Rok. He had carried booty for the guerrillas and had joined our unit instead of returning home. A mere recruit though he was, he was good at daily routine and fighting. O Jung Hup also said that he was a loyal man and that as his parents were living in Xigang, he would get salt without fail if he went there.

I called him and asked him if he could do this for us. He replied that he would try. He further said that his father went to the mountains around this time of year to gather firewood and that if he himself went in plain clothes, he could meet his father unnoticed by enemy agents and ask him to obtain the salt.

I gave him the assignment and attached an assistant to him. The two of them went off in search of this vital substance.

His father was delighted to see him. He said he was very proud that his son had become General Kim's soldier and felt relieved that his boy should be in the care of the General. He mentioned that the Japs were recently claiming that General Kim had been killed and asked whether this was true. Kim Pong Rok replied that he had just received an order from the General himself at camp before coming to see his father and that the General was perfectly hale and hearty. His father, wiping away tears of relief, said that he had thought so, but he had nevertheless been terribly worried when he had

heard all these ominous rumours about the General. He was so happy to know that General Kim was alive. When his son explained why he had come home, the old man was surprised. Regretting the fact that the revolutionary army should be unable to fight because of a salt deficiency, he promised that he would get it by any possible means to relieve the General of this burden.

Though he reassured his son, the old man found it not so easy to get salt after all. He could buy one or two kilogrammes by himself, but he would be suspected by the enemy if he bought more than that. The Manchukuo authorities and police forbade shops to sell salt beyond a prescribed limit. They also spied on shops now and then, investigating in secret the sale of the condiment. Some shopkeepers were enemy agents; they regularly reported their customers' purchase of goods to the enemy.

Although he himself could buy a certain amount, the old man asked his neighbour and a close acquaintance of his to help him as well so as to obtain as much salt as possible, for he had heard from his son that the guerrillas on the march numbered hundreds. The neighbour promised to cooperate. Then the neighbour told one of his friends proudly that General Kim Il Sung had sent a man from the mountains to obtain salt and that he had promised to do his share. He told his friend to buy as much salt as possible if he was willing to help the guerrillas. Thus the third old man also set out to obtain salt–and this was where the trouble started. Unaware that his son was an enemy agent, the third old man revealed the secret to the young man, a member of the Concordia Association. In those days the Japanese imperialists were bent on "surrender hunting" by forming "pacification squads" and "surrender-hunting teams". The Concordia Association members took part in the operation. The enemy agent reported to his superior what he had heard from his father.

Informed that we were planning to obtain large amounts of salt through the old men, the intelligence service of the Kwantung Army ordered the police to buy up all the salt from the shops in the area of Xigang and to replace it with salt transported by air in haste from Changchun. This salt had been poisoned. If one ate this particular salt, one did not die on the spot, but got a headache and became weak in the legs, and lost all combat efficiency.

The old men, including Kim Pong Rok's father, who went around making their purchases, were ignorant of this. The enemy had planned the scheme in so strictly confidential and crafty a manner that even the shopkeepers, who were said to be sharp-witted, got no scent of the plot.

The two old men then left with Kim Pong Rok for the guerrilla bivouac. They arrived at around 1 or 2 o'clock in the afternoon.

I thanked them and instructed that the salt be shared out among the units.

In those days Comrade Kim Jong Suk always carried vinegar with her for safety's sake, as she was in charge of cooking for Headquarters. After putting some of the vinegar to the salt that had been allotted to Headquarters, she said that the salt seemed to be poisoned. Vinegar is an instant reagent to food poison.

The staff of Headquarters and the soldiers of the Guard Company did not eat the poisoned salt. They regarded it as their moral duty and discipline not to eat before their Commander. That day they had not eaten either, for they were waiting for me to close a meeting and come to my tent.

It was during the meeting that I received the report about the possible poisoning of the salt, so I quickly adjourned the meeting. I threw some salt into a campfire and saw a blue flame spurting out of it. Poisoned salt flares up in blue flames.

I ordered a supply officer to collect all the salt that had been distributed to the units. Some of the guerrillas were embarrassed at the order, for they had already eaten small amounts of it. Some units, though ordered to collect salt, would not return it, doubting that it had really been poisoned. Worse still, some guerrillas hid it in their small pouches.

The worst problem was that the 7th and 8th Regiments had already left for a raid after eating it.

We had planned to attack the enemy that evening and obtain food before going in the direction of the Heixiazigou Secret Camp, so I had given the regiments a combat mission.

It was obvious that the enemy who had fed us poisoned salt would fall upon us at daybreak, and I was quite worried, as the main combat forces had been committed to battle. Just as I was about to send my orderlies to call

them back immediately, the combatants themselves returned, dejected and panting. I had never seen O Jung Hup making a report on his arrival in such a sluggish manner. The others were no better than him. Some of them felt so weak, they fell even before reaching the bivouac.

Obviously the enemy intended to pounce on us when we had lost all our combat energy and to capture or destroy us all at one go. The cunning enemy must have calculated when the salt would arrive at our unit, by what time we would eat it and by what time all my men would be lying around, helpless. The situation was serious. The whole unit except Headquarters was going to be exposed to the enemy's attack while they were intoxicated. We found ourselves in a truly critical situation. It was a question of whether the whole unit would be annihilated, or remain alive to continue its resistance against Japan.

I felt far more apprehensive than in Xiaotanghe in the spring of 1937, when we had been surrounded by thousands of enemy troops. I do not know how I can describe my anxiety at that time.

Though surrounded by large enemy forces in Xiaotanghe, I was determined to break through the encirclement by striking the enemy hard because my men were able to fight. But now things were different. It was terrible to be anticipating an enemy attack while my unit was suffering from the effects of poison.

We discussed the threatening situation. Some of the soldiers, furious, suggested executing the old men then and there. They said the old men must be the enemy agents, otherwise they would not have brought the poisoned salt.

They were wrong in their judgement. If the old men had been in secret contact with the enemy and had known that the salt was poisoned, they would have handed it over to the guerrillas who had gone to the village in Xigang; they would not have taken the trouble to bring it to us themselves. And a father would certainly not have brought poisoned salt to kill his own son! I severely criticized those who had suggested killing the old men. I said, "How absurd it is for you to suggest executing these old men, who carried heavy loads of salt at the risk of their lives to support their fighting sons! You should instead be giving them a warm welcome. Apparently you have lost

your senses because you ate the poisoned salt. They were obviously as ignorant of the fact that the salt was poisoned as we were. We've been caught by an enemy trick. The enemy is bound to attack us when the poison has taken its effect on us, so all of you who can still move must quickly get ready to fight and take antitoxic measures. There is no other choice. At daybreak the enemy will come. Not many of us can fight now, so it's going to be a do-or-die battle today."

But the soldiers of the regiments, the major units, said they were too weak to move.

"However weak you are, you must leave this place before the enemy attacks us," I urged. "As long as you are alive, you have to get to a safe place, even if it means crawling on all fours. Otherwise, we"ll all be killed when the enemy planes start dropping bombs on us and when their ground forces surround us and open up with their artillery."

In response to my instructions the regiments crawled on all fours to the safety of the forest. I got the Headquarters guards and the machine-gun platoon fully ready for combat.

Some hours later the enemy came to attack us, as we had anticipated. We fought the enemy fiercely for two days. As the main force of the regiments were sheltered in a safe place, only the machine-gun platoon and the Headquarters guards fought the enemy. They battled well, unafraid of death.

Judging from their use of the slowly acting poison, the enemy must have planned to take us all prisoner. If they had captured us, they would have advertised to the world that they were "finished with the punitive operations against the communist bandits" in Manchuria. In those days they kept bragging that the "punitive" operations against the guerrillas would end once they had destroyed Kim Il Sung's unit.

After repulsing the enemy, we went to the forest where the regiments had taken shelter. We set up a hospital there and treated the soldiers for about a week, feeding them boiled green beans and pumpkins. Everyone fully recovered.

While the salt incident was a most trying experience for me, it was young

Kim Pong Rok who was most upset when he heard that the salt had been poisoned. How humiliated he felt at the thought that the salt he and his father brought had been poisoned! They were both pale and at a loss, unable to utter a word, like guilty persons waiting for punishment.

I eased the old men's minds, insisting that we not only did not suspect them in the least but felt grateful to them for their sincere efforts. Then I told Kim Il, who was familiar with things in West Jiandao, to take them to a safe place, not to their homes for I was afraid that the enraged enemy would commit an atrocity against the innocent old men by blaming them for the failure of their scheme and for the heavy loss of their men. They would kill Kim Pong Rok's father and his neighbour for the simple reason that the two men had bought salt for the guerrillas, being in secret contact with the guerrilla son of one of them.

Kim Il carried out the assignment responsibly. He took the two old men to a safe place first, then took their families there in secret as well. He also found out how it was that the salt had been poisoned in the first place: the son of the third old man was an evil renegade.

During the Korean war, enemy spies who had wormed their way into our health establishments did not hesitate to kill patients by poisoning their food. It was a deliberately harmful act aimed at damping the people's spirit and planting the seed of mistrust and discord among the medical workers. US imperialists also resorted to germ warfare without hesitation to exterminate our people.

Counterrevolution always resorts to every possible means and method in its attack on revolution. As the history of the 20th century shows, imperialists, both Eastern and Western, are skilled butchers of humanity. They constantly practise their skill to wipe out those who want to live independently, unshackled by others. Modern imperialists these days are conducting operations not just to wipe out hundreds of revolutionaries, or tens of thousands of revolutionary army troops, but carrying out mad procedures meant to destroy all socialist countries at one time. Therefore, we must always be vigilant against their manoeuvres.

Because I suffered such difficulties from lack of salt in the mountains during the anti-Japanese revolution, I questioned the people from the northern border areas after liberation about their salt situation whenever I met them. I once talked to a man who was vice-chairman of the Huchang County consumers' cooperative and asked him what was most lacking among the goods needed by the people in the county. He said it was salt.

In the summer of 1947 I met in my office a boy from Changsong who had come back from a camping trip in the Kumgang Mountains. At that time the boy told me that the people in the Changsong area were suffering serious salt shortages. After this, I instructed the officials in the commercial sector to take measures to supply sufficient salt to people living in remote mountain areas. As Ryanggang Province is a mountainous region far from the sea, like North and West Jiandao, its inhabitants may experience salt shortages. When I was in Kosanjin during the war I found that salt was in short supply in Jagang Province, too, so I myself ensured that salt was supplied to the people in Kosanjin even though we were going through the difficult period of our temporary retreat at the time.

Officials must always make sure the people living in inland regions are not suffering from a lack of salt.

Deer farms should also feed salt to the animals on a regular basis.

4. Battle of Taehongdan

In May 1939, General Kim Il Sung crossed the Amnok River, again in command of the main force of the KPRA, and destroyed a large number of enemy troops on the Paektu Plateau.

At that time the soldiers of the KPRA spent their first night in the homeland in the forest of Chongbong, which is not far from today's Rimyongsu Workers District, Samjiyon County. This bivouac site was rediscovered after nearly 20 years and made known to the public. Afterwards, the Musan and Yonsa historical sites were also found.

This section compiles the fatherly leader's descriptions of the operation in the Musan area, given on several different occasions.

The question of our advance into the homeland, which was brought up at Nanpaizi, came to a final decision at the Beidadingzi meeting.

My men were eager to advance into the homeland as soon as possible. They wanted to fight a larger battle in Korea than those fought at Pochonbo or Jiansanfeng to shake the world. We were afraid of nothing because we were strong, having become as tough as steel through the Arduous March of more than 100 days.

Demonstrating this newfound strength, we attacked many county towns and villages along the Amnok River that spring, then slipped into the homeland.

I think I have recounted the purpose of our advance into the homeland more than once.

As I mentioned before, the number one priority of the political and military activities of the KPRA was the advance into the homeland. The final objective of the many large and small military operations we had conducted in northern and eastern Manchuria had always been to advance into the homeland and liberate the country. We had concentrated all our efforts on this goal.

A careful timing of the operations in Korea was important. As June 1937

was the right time, so was May 1939. Why? The prevailing situation, our own strong desire and the hopes of the people back in the homeland made a KPRA push into Korea imperative.

We made a decision to expand the armed struggle deep into Korea, based on a detailed analysis of the circumstances at home and abroad.

In May 1939 the Sino-Japanese War was raging in the East and World War II was brewing in the West.

The Japanese imperialists were trying to wind up the dragged-out Sino-Japanese War, concentrate on the possibility of invading the Soviet Union and draw up a strategy for advancing towards the south. In order to build up their home front, they stepped up their offensive against the KPRA, while intensifying their economic plunder and fascist repression of Korea. A typical example was the “Hyesan incident”.

In this incident, revolutionary organizations in West Jiandao and some of those in the northern part of Korea suffered serious damage. Some survived, but most of the important organizations were destroyed. Even those that escaped trouble were cowed.

Following this incident, the enemy continued to spread the lie that the KPRA had perished. In some places they held celebrations for our “destruction” and their “victory”. Some revolutionary organization members who had been deceived by the false propaganda about our supposed demise reasoned this way: “If it is true that something has happened to General Kim Il Sung, the Korean revolution is as good as finished. What’s the use of carrying on a hopeless struggle?” They came in person to our political operatives’ camp to find out if the rumour about me was true.

In this situation, the best way to bring about a resurgence in the anti-Japanese revolution was for a large KPRA force to advance into the homeland and strike the enemy hard to show that it was still alive to those at home and abroad. Even if some political operatives managed to penetrate into Korea and tell the people that the KPRA was still in operation, that General Kim Il Sung was healthy and that the revolution was advancing, limited propaganda such as this would have little effect on the situation.

Another main objective of our advance into Korea was to resurrect destroyed revolutionary organizations and expand them, and at the same time build Party organizations and develop the united front movement to rouse all the people to a nationwide resistance.

It was immediately after the Battles of Pochonbo and Jiansanfeng that revolutionary organizations in the homeland had suddenly multiplied. The sound of gunshots awakens the people, and the awakened people naturally flow into revolutionary organizations. If we had not fought battles after moving to West Jiandao following the Nanhutou meeting but had idled away our time eating the food supplied by the people, revolutionary organizations would not have expanded in the Changbai area so rapidly and on such a large scale.

Revolutionary organizations had sprung up like bamboo shoots after the rain in West Jiandao, partly because we had conducted our ideological work successfully, but mainly because we had fought many battles, demonstrating the mettle of the KPRA and convincing the people that the anti-Japanese revolution was bound to emerge victorious.

When I selected the Musan area as the theatre of our operations in Korea, some commanding officers were quite bewildered because they knew that after the Battle of Pochonbo the enemy had reinforced its guard troops in this area to several times their former strength, and with the most vicious elements at that. To venture in there with a large force would, in fact, be extremely difficult and dangerous.

Nevertheless, I made a decision to move to this area, precisely because it was most difficult and dangerous. If we destroyed the enemy here, the results would be several times greater than operations in any other part of northern Korea.

In those days there were large numbers of workers in the Musan area, including iron miners, the builders of a hydroelectric power station and lumbermen. The sound of our gunshots would make a strong impact on the workers, and through them the news would rapidly spread all across the country.

Our aim was to use the roar of our gunfire to awaken the workers of

Musan, as well as the workers and peasants in North Hamgyong Province, and thus go on to stir up all the people into a revolution against the Japanese.

Accordingly, in the spring of 1939 the KPRA units advanced into the Musan area.

We crossed the Amnok River at Dam No. 5. I carried Ri O Song across the river on my back. Wading through the water, I asked him if he knew the name of the river. He said no. In those days my men had almost no idea of where the national boundary lay. When I said it was the Amnok River, he asked me to lower him into the water: he wanted to drench himself in the waters of a Korean river.

Near the dam were many azalea bushes. When they saw the azaleas of their homeland, the guerrillas shouted for joy.

My most lasting memory of the occasion is that of the women guerrillas kneeling around a thicket of azaleas, laughing and crying at the same time with emotion as they gazed at the flowers. Some of the women threw their arms around the blossoming bushes. Their faces were beaming, but their eyes streamed with tears.

The azaleas we saw that day were not simply flowers. They were part of the homeland, a part of its flesh, so to speak, occupied by the Japanese imperialists. To my mind the azaleas were smiling too, but it was a sad smile. As the guerrillas shed tears at the sight of the azaleas, the flowers themselves seemed to weep. Patriotism is indeed a strong feeling. Can flowers feel sorrow or shed tears? What difference is there between the azaleas of those days and those of today? To us, who were grieving the loss of our national freedom, even the azaleas seemed to lament over the ruin of our country as they flowered and shed their blossoms in a land occupied by the Japanese.

On that day these were no mere flowers to the guerrillas, but the azaleas of the homeland. This flower was a symbol of the ardent desire of the guerrillas who so greatly loved their fatherland and their people, a desire to hurry the spring of national liberation so that a paradise for people could be built in a liberated Korea.

Whenever I see azaleas now, I recall the anti-Japanese armed struggle and

feel an urge to quote poetry. The azalea of the homeland, the azalea of Mt. Paektu, light pink azalea that heralds the spring of Korea! How full of meaning this lovely flower is!

Just as we arrived at Chongbong, the fog lifted and the sun came out. The weather was perfect. I still remember that we built a campfire and dried our leggings, which were wet with dew.

I climbed the hill to see if there was any sign of enemy movement and to get an idea of the terrain. I saw smoke coiling up at a distance and heard the sound of chopping wood, so I warned my officers of possible enemy presence and ordered them to maintain stealth in movement. I chose camp sites for every unit, posted sentries and sent out reconnaissance parties.

When camp had been set up, some of the men stripped the bark off trees and wrote mottoes on the trunks. During the anti-Japanese revolutionary struggle, the guerrillas wrote mottoes on trees in many of the places they stopped. Among such writers was Ju Yuan-ai from Xinglongcun, who had studied hard and was good at calligraphy. Yan An-ji, who had been a teacher in a secondary school, was also a good calligrapher. Comrade Kim Jong Suk, too, wrote many mottoes.

We have lost these excellent comrades, but the trees and their mottoes remain, so it seems as if the writers were still alive. Our people have now discovered these priceless treasures.

The motto-bearing trees at Chongbong preserve the revolutionary spirit of our comrades-in-arms. When I see these trees I feel as if I saw the fighters themselves. The mottoes written by the anti-Japanese revolutionary fighters are not mere phrases, but valuable revolutionary documents. The mottoes glow with the spirit of these fighters. They are lasting treasures for our Party and people to preserve and cherish.

We bivouacked overnight at Chongbong and then moved to Konchang the next day.

While we were camping at Konchang, the enemy sent two spies disguised as anglers into the bivouac area. Around Konchang there was hardly any place for fishing, yet these “anglers” were sneaking around our bivouac area

in broad daylight. Their demeanour was so suspicious that the sentry tried to arrest them to examine them. One of them ran away, while the other obeyed the sentry. The captured man was even carrying a pistol.

The spy confessed that the enemy had already caught wind of our presence in the homeland and had sent out a large number of garrison and police troops to search the forests thoroughly.

As we had anticipated, the enemy forces were concentrated in this area. The best way in this situation was to slip away from their encirclement.

I made a tactical feint against possible enemy actions. I grouped two small forces and sent one detachment to strike the enemy at Phothae-ri and ordered the other to make footprints towards Changbai across the Amnok River, then disappear. I did this to confuse the enemy by giving them the impression that the KPRA was operating at several different places.

At dawn the next day we left Konchang and marched towards Pegae Hill. That day the fog was so dense that we could not see an inch ahead. The scouting party had a trouble trying to find its way, so I joined it and decided the direction we should take by using a military map and a compass. Our march was very risky. If an enemy search party suddenly appeared and encountered us, it would mean trouble. We would have no problem in destroying them, but the sound of gunfire would lay obstacles to our future action. We were therefore very nervous while on the march.

On arriving in Pegae Hill, I ordered the unit to bivouac and sent out reconnaissance parties. They discovered a splendid, newly-built highway that ran through the primeval forest east of Pegae Hill. I confirmed that this was the Kapsan-Musan guard road, which I had already been informed of. It was a road for emergency use, connecting uninhabited areas between Kapsan and Musan. This road was supposed to be for moving the “punitive” forces by mobile means to any spot on short notice in case the KPRA pushed into Korea. I was told that because the project had been finished only recently, the road was kept clear for inspection, and no unauthorized traffic was allowed. The scouts said that “Off Limits” notices had been put up everywhere.

The Japanese imperialists created such “Off Limits” and “No Admission”

zones in different parts of our country and strictly prohibited Koreans access to them. Under Japanese rule, in the heart of Pyongyang were streets where only Japanese lived. When Koreans appeared in these streets the Japanese policemen or merchants scowled at them. Korean children were not allowed to hang around the gates of Japanese schools. If a Korean boy who was ignorant of such a rule happened to wander through the gate into the playground now and then, he got his ears boxed or was treated as a beggar. However, Japanese children were free to enter Korean school grounds or the Korean sections of town, where they did anything they pleased. One day a group of delinquent Japanese boys from Pyongyang raided a melon field near the Changdok School, trampled all over the field and made off with the melons a poor farmer had carefully cultivated all through the summer. I and my classmates went after them, taught them a lesson and drove them back to the city.

Though the enemy had made even the border area an "Off Limits" zone to Koreans, we would not tolerate this. I thought that in order to challenge the Japanese rule over Korea we should demonstrate the strength of the KPRA by dealing a blow to the enemy who had built the Kapsan-Musan guard road.

The road that had been constructed on the frontier and was kept under strict guard was an apparent attempt by the enemy to make up for their ignominious defeats in Pochonbo and Jiansanfeng.

I summoned my officers and gave them the following briefing:

"We are now on the march within the enemy lines. The enemy is everywhere, in front and rear and on both sides of us. Suspecting that we are operating in the homeland, the enemy has mobilized large 'punitive' forces from border garrisons and police troops in different parts of North and South Hamgyong Provinces and is preparing a large-scale encirclement and search operation. Because the escaped spy saw us, the enemy may be following us now through Konchang after making a search for us at Chongbong. We must slip away quickly into the Musan area and put into effect the operation plan we drew up in Beidadingzi, but the situation makes our advance difficult. There is danger that we may be caught in the mesh of complete encirclement. How can we advance with speed into Musan?"

The commanding officers made one suggestion after another. Some comrades said that we should dispatch a small unit to lure the enemy in the direction of Changbai before the main force advanced into the Musan area. Other comrades asserted that we should fight a big battle around Pegae Hill, as we did in Jiansanfeng, now that the way to the Musan area was blocked.

All their opinions sounded good, but none of them convinced me of the possibility of moving fast to Musan.

I heard all their suggestions and organized a debate before giving my own idea. My plan was to march in broad daylight along the new highway that was waiting for inspection.

The officers were taken aback at my proposal. This was natural, for my plan meant that a large force would march, not along a back lane, but a special highway the enemy had built solely for the "punitive" operations against us. Their faces showed that they had little confidence in my suggestion. This very fact rather proved that my plan to march boldly in the daytime along the highway was a tactically correct one.

I outlined for them the tactical intention of my plan and the possibility of realizing it.

"Your own attitude proves that it is possible to march in broad daylight along the Kapsan-Musan guard road. When I suggested this plan you were stunned.

"The enemy, too, will never be able to imagine that a large KPRA unit would march along their specially-built guard road right in the middle of the day. This very fact makes it amply possible to carry out the march. Doing boldly what the enemy regards as impossible is a tactical guarantee of success in this move."

The commanding officers all left Pegae Hill full of confidence.

So many azaleas were in full bloom everywhere, the faces of our guerrillas looked rosy.

On Lake Samji, too, there were many azaleas. Masses of them along the shore and their reflection in the water made such a picturesque scene that I felt I would like to build a hut and live here for ever. It was wonderful to see such rare scenic beauty in an alpine region like the Paektu Plateau.

Highland scenery has a peculiar attraction. The scenery around Lake Samji is as majestic as Mt. Paektu and at the same time it looks delicate, as if spangled with jewels. The landscape of Lake Samji in which the scenic beauty of the highland blends in harmony with the serene plain, is worth its weight in gold.

That day I felt in the marrow of my bones how lovely was the land that had been taken from us.

I was so fascinated with the picturesque scenery of Lake Samji that I made up my mind to build this place into a holiday centre for our people after driving the Japanese imperialists out of Korea and show it off to the world. This ideal has been realized today.

Lake Samji has become a revolutionary battle site that attracts many visitors from different countries. It is also renowned as a health resort for its unique highland charm.

Until 1956, when Comrade Kim Jong Il visited the revolutionary battle sites in Ryanggang Province with the first expedition party in our country, only fallen trees and piles of leaves were seen on the lake, and most of the area remained untouched. There was only a worn-out skiff and an old-style pavilion that the local people had built before the Korean war to enhance the beauty of the lake.

When I returned from my official visits to the Soviet Union and the people's democracies in East Europe, Comrade Kim Jong Il told me about the activities of his expedition. He recounted in excitement what he had learned and felt during the visit to the revolutionary battle sites. He said he regretted that these historical sites, so alive with the spirit of the revolutionary forerunners, had not been laid out properly, but remained in a natural state without guides to explain their history to visitors.

In 1956 a campaign just started to eliminate flunkeyism and dogmatism and establish Juche in ideological work. Until that time Juche had not been firmly established in the ideological work of our Party. As a result, the materials and relics associated with the revolutionary history of our Party had not been unearthed widely, the revolutionary battle sites were not laid out

properly and a full-scale study of revolutionary traditions had not been made.

It was a significant event that in this situation Comrade Kim Jong Il decided to form an expedition to the revolutionary battle sites in the Mt. Paektu area with his fellow students from Pyongyang Secondary School No. 1.

After we had left Lake Samji, we marched as fast as we could to the Musan area by the Kapsan-Musan guard road. We called such a march tactic "one thousand miles at a run".

During the anti-Japanese armed struggle, we employed this tactic several times, each time with good results. But never before had there been an instance of a large force of hundreds of soldiers moving over a long distance in broad daylight on a highway like the one they called the guard road. It was we ourselves who opened the guard road for the Japanese, so to speak. We marched in fine array along the straight highway in broad daylight, reached Mupho on the Tuman River on that same day and pitched camp there.

I was told that when the enemy found out later that we had marched in the daytime along their guard road, they groaned in despair and called our bold move an "unprecedent oddity".

The march made a greater impact than the annihilation of several enemy regiments or divisions.

At Mupho I gave my officers a briefing in which I reviewed our march and set forth the task of pushing into the Taehongdan area. We decided to carry out military and political activities first around Sinsadong and Singaechok.

We left Mupho the next morning and arrived at the Taehongdan tableland. On arrival we had lunch in the vicinity of a mountain shrine and moved our forces in two directions, the 7th Regiment going to Singaechok by way of Tujibawi and the Guard Company and the 8th Regiment under my command to Sinsadong at the foot of Mt. Soroun.

At that time, we conducted political work at Sinsadong. I placed Headquarters on a small rise by a brook and went with several guardsmen and orderlies to the biggest lumbermen's residence in the village.

Seeing our sudden appearance in the Musan area, the people exclaimed in

great excitement and joy that it was a colossal lie of the enemy that the entire KPRA had frozen to death last winter. They wondered how it was possible for so many soldiers to appear suddenly in their midst from nowhere.

Their barracks was no better than a cowshed or a stable. I noticed a rope stretched low down the centre of the room like a wash-line. I asked one of the workers what the rope was for. He replied that they put their feet on it while sleeping. The room was so narrow that the men who were to lie on both sides of the rope could not stretch their legs, so they had to crisscross their feet on the rope.

The workers were treated worse than cows or horses. A cow or a horse at least has human protection.

That evening many people gathered in the barracks. Both the room and yard were crowded. I made a speech before the people of Sinsadong and conducted organizational and political work among them.

The warm hospitality the villagers gave us that night is still fresh in my mind. There were many slash-and-burn peasants in the village who were unable to do spring sowing for lack of seeds. Nevertheless, the village women prepared a meal of cooked glutinous millet and potato-starch noodles for us "to treat the Korean army under the command of General Kim Il Sung," they said.

Our men were so moved by their kindness that they unpacked and shared out all their provisions among the villagers when they left Sinsadong. Comrade Kim Jong Suk cooked all her wheat flour into dough-flake soup for the host's family and applied her face-cream to his daughter's hands. When we left, the villagers saw us off in tears.

I foresaw that the enemy who had been hit at Singaechok would naturally chase us, and made a decision to destroy them in the Taehongdan tableland, where the terrain features were in our favour. After leaving Sinsadong, we lay in ambush on a low hill on the tableland, waiting for O Jung Hup's 7th Regiment to return from Singaechok. As I instructed, the 7th Regiment had struck the enemy in Singaechok and were now coming back. But they were somewhat elated at their success in destroying the enemy in Singaechok and

in capturing several Japanese foremen, so they were not aware of an alarming fact: an enemy force was trailing close behind them in secret. The force was made up of border garrisons and Changphyong police troops that had come running at the news of the defeat of their colleagues in Singaechok.

At first my men, lying in ambush, took the soldiers coming at the heels of the 7th Regiment for a friendly force. They could not distinguish between friend and foe partly because the fog was so thick, but mainly because the enemy was so close behind the 7th Regiment.

I realized instantly that the helmeted soldiers coming in the wake of our regiment was an enemy force. The situation had developed as I expected, but the 7th Regiment was in a very dangerous position, right in front of the muzzles of enemy guns. Because of this situation, the 8th Regiment and Guard Company were going to have to fire with special care at the open-fire signal, otherwise there was the possibility of their killing their own troops. But we could not wait indefinitely until a wide enough gap was created between friend and foe. If we delayed, the enemy might attack the 7th Regiment first. In such a case, the supply-service men and the lumbermen who were carrying packs for us, might suffer great losses.

As soon as the 7th Regiment had passed by the area of our ambush, I signalled the supply-service men and lumbermen to throw themselves on the ground, then ordered my men to open fire.

Hundreds of rifles opened up with a deafening roar. The guerrillas were in a fever of excitement at the time. They were charged with emotion and energy at the thought that the whole country would hear the sound of this particular gunfire. I, too, was every bit as excited as my men. We mowed down the enemy troops. Those who survived, however, resisted desperately. The army and police troops of the enemy on the border were much more tenacious and ruthless than those in other areas. Their resistance was really formidable. Apparently the Japanese deployed their elite troops in the border regions.

The supply-service men of the 7th Regiment and workers between us and the enemy could not raise their heads under the blanket of fire. The workers were at a loss as to what to do. Among the supply-carriers there were some

Japanese.

At that time a somewhat peculiar thing happened on the battlefield. The workers were divided into two sides, with Koreans running towards the KPRA with the supplies on their backs and the Japanese crawling towards the Japanese troops, tossing away their loads.

No Korean worker went over to the Japanese.

At this sight, I keenly felt that the heart of the nation was beating as it should.

Most of the enemy who encountered us in Taehongdan were killed.

One of us was killed and two wounded. Kim Se Ok fell in action. He was the fiance of Ma Kuk Hwa, younger sister of Ma Tong Hui. He was shot through his chest while guiding the supply-carriers to a safe place with the sergeant-major of the 7th Regiment. Seeing his wound, I knew it was hopeless. Apparently Kim Song Guk carried him on his back. I remember that Kim Song Guk's uniform was soaked with blood.

I intended to send back the lumbermen before crossing the Tuman River. But they followed us, saying that they could not return while Kim Se Ok was in a critical condition after saving their lives.

Kim Se Ok was in a coma as we crossed the Tuman River.

When he finally died, all of us cried. The supply-carriers who followed us could not keep back their tears either.

He was buried at the foot of the Changshan Pass. After liberation we moved his grave to Taehongdan.

On the day when we buried Kim Se Ok we evacuated Nam Tong Su, also seriously wounded, to a nearby secret camp. It turned out that in that camp he lived alone for over one hundred days, like Robinson Crusoe. Some people may not believe that a seriously wounded man who could hardly move stayed alive for one hundred days without a regular supply of food in an isolated situation without any contact with the unit, but it was a fact.

The man who was supposed to nurse him was a Chinese called Old Man Zheng, who had recently come to us from a mountain rebels' unit. Fooled by the Japanese propaganda that the People's Revolutionary Army was a "bandit

group” he had joined our unit to earn money. He thought that robbery with the “communist bandits” would give him a better chance at making money than with the mountain rebels. When he realized that the People’s Revolutionary Army was an honourable army, not a gang of bandits, he decided our unit was not the place for him, an idler. He made up his mind to kill Nam Tong Su before he returned home, thinking that he would be safer if he killed a communist before going back.

Nam Tong Su guessed his evil design and crawled out of the hut at night. He hid himself for two days, covering his body with fallen leaves. After Old Man Zheng had left, he kept himself alive eating tree leaves, grass sprouts and the meat of squirrels and snakes, waiting to meet our liaison man. But to make matters worse, the liaison man himself was killed in a “punitive” attack.

He had to live again in isolation. While wandering about, looking for our unit, he went to Kapsan where his mother was working in an underground organization. Afterwards, he moved to eastern Manchuria to help the Chinese revolution. I cannot remember clearly when he came to the homeland in response to our call.

When he arrived, he burst into tears and said, “General, I come to you only now. I even lost the blanket you gave me.”

Our comrades-in-arms left traces in many parts of the Musan area. Jong Il Gwon, nicknamed “shorty”, once worked around Pulgunbawi with Pak Song Chol.

The Japanese imperialist invaders were astonished at the news that the KPRA had appeared in the Musan area, annihilated a large number of their troops at Taehongdan and crossed back over the Tuman River safely. The mere fact that the KPRA had appeared on Korean soil was enough to drive the enemy mad.

After the Nanhutou meeting the main theatre of operations for the KPRA was the West Jiandao area southwest of Mt. Paektu.

Following our advance into the Mt. Paektu area, our guerrilla actions in West Jiandao often hit the headlines of newspapers and news services in Korea and Manchuria. The Japanese army and police, deployed along the

Amnok River from Hyesan to Junggangjin via Singalpha, were constantly on the alert and desperate to block a KPRA "border invasion".

The police department of South Hamgyong Province collected information about our actions from every angle under the title of "The Movement of the Bandits on the Other Side of the River" and sent it regularly to the police affairs bureau of the Government-General of Korea, the headquarters of the Japanese Korea army, the police departments of North and South Hamgyong, North Phyongan and other provinces along the border area and the headquarters of the Ranam 19th Division.

The intelligence services of the Japanese army and police often predicted where we would appear and what we would do next.

However, the fact that we appeared at the foot of Mt. Paektu, especially in the Musan area, which was strictly guarded by their border garrison, and annihilated the "punitive" troops at one blow, then disappeared like a whirlwind–this was completely beyond their powers of imagination. They were left aghast.

The enemy made the mistake of thinking that the KPRA was on the verge of collapse because of its losses in the Arduous March and the failure of the Rehe expedition. They thought that only a trifling remnant of our force was struggling for survival in Changbai, Linjiang and other areas along the Amnok River, or in Mengjiang, Fusong and other northern Dongbiandao areas.

Along with the Battle of Pochonbo, the operation in the Musan area was the largest-scale action of the greatest significance in the military operations we performed in the homeland. The Battle of Pochonbo demonstrated that Korea was not dead, but very much alive, whereas the Battle of Taehongdan was an event of historical significance in that it showed in a concrete way that the KPRA was not only still alive, but also had grown stronger and was dealing a crushing blow to the Japanese imperialists even as the enemy was going around claiming that it had been destroyed.

The gunshots of the KPRA in the Musan area gave hope to the dispirited people in Korea with proof that our revolution was back on its feet and invigorated the revolution in the homeland, which had suffered a temporary

setback because of the “Hyesan incident”. Our military triumph in the Musan area exposed to the world the lie of the enemy propaganda that the KPRA was totally destroyed. After this battle our people no longer believed the enemy about anything they said. Following the battle in the Musan area the workers, peasants and other broad masses from all walks of life in the homeland joined in the current of the anti-Japanese revolution, each more convinced than the other that as long as the KPRA remained alive, the day of national liberation was close at hand.

5. The *Tano* Festival at Yushidong

After the Battle of Taehongdan, the main force of the Korean People's Revolutionary Army shifted the theatre of its activities to the northeastern part of Mt. Paektu and conducted brisk military and political activities along the Tuman River. Typical of its military actions in that period was the battle of Wukoujiang, and its most conspicuous political work among the masses of people was the *Tano*[15] festival at Yushidong.

Yushidong in Helong County, China, is a mountain village across the Tuman River from Musan County in Korea.

Years later, during an on-the-spot guidance tour of the Taehongdan area, on the Tuman River, the respected leader Comrade Kim Il Sung recalled with deep emotion the historical events that took place in the course of the KPRA's military and political activities in the northeastern part of Mt. Paektu after the operation in the Musan area.

I remember the football game played at Yushidong on the *Tano* festival in 1939. Over 30 years have gone by, but I can still recall that particular event. Some people may not believe that we guerrilla fighters took time out to play football; nevertheless, we didn't spend every day of the year shooting and battling. While fighting, we also had a life of culture and leisure suitable to the characteristics of a guerrilla army. In the first half of the 1930s we frequently held sport events in the guerrilla zones. There were quite a few good football players in the Wangqing guerrilla unit.

Later, we had football games in Luozigou before our second expedition to northern Manchuria, as well as at Yushidong; they were quite interesting. The Korean residents in Jiandao were good footballers. The best among them were those living in Longjing.

After the Battle of Taehongdan, we moved the theatre of our struggle to the area northeast of Mt. Paektu, as planned, to build a strategic base for our

revolution in that area. At the meeting of military and political cadres, held at Dagou, Antu County, late in May that year, I set out the policy of building another strong bulwark of our revolution in the area northeast of Mt. Paektu through intensive military and political activities in this area.

Our revolutionary bases, which had been newly established after the dissolution of the guerrilla zones, were mostly in West Jiandao and in various parts of the homeland centring around Mt. Paektu. Given the situation, if we set up new revolutionary bases in the area northeast of Mt. Paektu and the northern part of Korea along the Tuman, we would be able to extend the area of KPRA activities and operations, as well as its bases in the rear, over the whole territory of Korea, and while relying on those bases, give a stronger impetus to the Korean revolution as a whole.

Developing the revolution over a wider area is not a special undertaking. It is mainly a matter of building up the ranks of people who can be the motive force of revolution, extending the bases of activities, and obtaining more weapons. In other words, solving the problem of manpower, land and weapons to suit the objective situation and increasing them steadily means developing the revolution in depth. As long as there are people, territory and weapons, we are fully able to defend revolution, expand and develop it.

In order to establish bases, it is necessary above all to overwhelm the enemy through active military operations and to create favourable circumstances for free political work and activities, so that organizations among the local inhabitants of the areas concerned can be built. Only then will the enemy be prevented from hampering the activities of the revolutionary army. Immediately after crossing the Tuman River following the Battle of Taehongdan, we struck the enemy at Dongjingping, Huifengdong, Wukoujiang, and Qingtoucun, and raided the lumber station near Qingshanli. All these battles were aimed at overwhelming the enemy militarily and creating conditions favourable for KPRA activities.

After each battle we conducted political work among the masses and built new organizations. The joint celebration of the *Tano* festival by both the army and people at Yushidong was a particular example of our political work.

Whenever we were in a new area, we stepped up the revolutionary transformation of the masses and strengthened mass foundations for the armed struggle through lively political work among the local inhabitants by applying a variety of forms and methods suited to the area. This was our traditional work method and consistent mode of activities.

At first we had no plans to celebrate the *Tano* festival at Yushidong, so no preparations were made. The enemy's suppression in the area was so harsh and the situation so grave that no one even thought of holding a celebration. We only decided to celebrate the festival after we had met the residents of Helong, where we moved after our offensive in the Musan area.

As seemed to be the case everywhere we went, the people in Jiandao at that time were full of fear and in low spirits.

The first people we met in Helong were two young peasant brothers, both addicted to opium-smoking. In those days the northeastern area in China was infested with opium addicts and opium was even used as money at that time. The more misruled the country is, the more prevalent are drugs like opium. The peasant brothers had drifted to Jiandao on the wind of emigration from Korea.

I wondered why these young people of fine appearance took pleasure in opium-smoking. I asked them why they were interested in a terrible habit that sapped their strength in both body and mind, a strength so essential to their work as farmers.

They replied without any compunction: "How can we live in this rotten world without smoking opium? We are living simply because it's impossible to die, and opium is the only thing that helps us forget the world. We first tried to console ourselves with drinking, but drinking needs companions to make it fun. The Japanese ban gatherings of people for pleasure even on holidays, calling it illegal, so we can't drink liquor, can we? That's why we decided to smoke opium."

They continued: "In a few days, it will be the *Tano* festival, but what's the use of such a holiday when people are not allowed to get together even for a bit of home-brewed liquor? In the past when we were at our native village, we used to have a good time on this day, wrestling, playing on the

village swing and eating rice cakes mixed with mugwort. Now that we are deprived of our country, we can't even think of such a holiday."

Listening to their complaints, I felt my heart ache. A human being without dreams is as good as dead. We live for the sake of meaning in life, not simply to eat and sleep. By life's meaning I mean its worth, the pride one feels in one's life. A worthwhile life means that one lives the life of a worthy person, exercising one's rights as a human being and creating one's own course in life. The lives of the young brothers who were addicted to opium were worth nothing. What life was there for people confined by a wall or a wire fence? That was mere existence, not life. Existence without life is worthless and without meaning.

From my childhood I had not liked opium-smokers, but I felt a certain sympathy for the young peasant brothers.

I persuaded them: "It's a crime for you as Korean young people to idle away your time, smoking opium, when the nation's destiny is at stake. Look! These young orderlies and even these women fighters have taken up arms to save the nation. Shame on you! You must give up opium-smoking."

The elder of the two scratched his head, saying that he did feel quite ashamed of living without a purpose.

After meeting the peasant brothers, I decided that we should conduct military and political activities more energetically in order to invigorate the people and encourage them to live with more hope in freedom. Political activities through speeches alone would not inspire the people. The people wanted to see and hear about the victorious revolution. Fighting made the revolution tangible for them. The 1930s was a period when a gunshot made a far greater impact than a long-winded speech.

We therefore stepped up our military actions along with our political work. First we attacked the enemy at Huifengdong, where the peasant brothers were living, and a nearby internment village. Our attack was so strong that the enemy was unable to fire even a single shot, but ran off into the mountains in disarray. At this sight the inhabitants of Huifengdong were beside themselves with joy.

Alarmed at our move to the area northeast of Mt. Paektu and the ensuing battles, in which we killed several hundred enemy troops through successive attacks on more than ten internment villages situated along the Tuman River, the Japanese imperialists made frantic efforts to hold us in check. This was the time when the Kwantung Army had provoked the brush-fire war in Khalkhin-Gol. When the war broke out, tens of thousands of Japanese troops moved to the front, and the enemy made a great fuss, saying it was really a time of emergency. Right at this time of emergency, the revolutionary army made one attack after another in their rear, thus adding to their confusion.

The Japanese were everywhere in the mountains around Helong. Their forces for the "punitive" operations were so large that one day my chief of staff who had watched the enemy through his field-glasses returned, his face pale with alarm. He told me that we would incur heavy losses if we fought any more battles. He meant that enemy strength was incomparably greater than ours.

I told him: "From the moment it was organized, our army has fought an enemy dozens and even hundreds of times larger than us. It's absurd to give up our planned operations simply because our force is smaller than the enemy. In such a situation we must strike the enemy even harder, without giving them a breathing space and by employing diverse tactics."

Around that time our Headquarters obtained reconnaissance information that a Japanese officer, who had been awarded his emperor's commendation for distinguished services at the front in northern China, had arrived in Bairiping to command the "punitive" forces. The officer was said to be on his way to Japan on leave for his military exploits. Hearing the rumour that the main force of the Korean People's Revolutionary Army had appeared in Antu and Helong, attacking the internment villages there, he bragged; "It is the shame of the Japanese army and nation that we have been suffering one defeat after another, unable to deal with a guerrilla army. I will wipe out this disgrace by annihilating Kim Il Sung's army." It seemed he was rather full of himself.

I was told the Japanese officer liked to pass himself off as a commander

of matchless valour. He had even had his chest tattooed with *Asura*, a buddhist "demon fighter".

Our scouts, who had been to Bairiping, brought, in addition to the story about *Asura*, the strange piece of news that the Japanese police in Helong County were preparing some *Tano* festival gifts to us. How comical it was that the "demon fighter" who had been awarded the emperor's commendation and was on his way to his native village on leave should come to Bairiping of his free will to "punish" our army on the one hand, and for the police to be preparing festive gifts for us on the other! If this was true, the enemy's gift preparation was surely a comedy without a precedent. It was obvious that the gifts would be a fake.

I decided that the enemy was so impudent as to prepare gifts because they had simply not been hit hard enough by the revolutionary army. I therefore planned alluring them from Bairiping towards the Wukou River and annihilating them at a blow.

The battleground we had chosen was a reed field not far from Bairiping. The field bordered the Wukou, along one side of which was a motorway. On both sides of the river and the motorway were forests favourable for ambush. The enemy appeared on the shore of the Wukou in the late morning as the fog was beginning to lift. Several hundred heavily-armed troops were marching in high spirits with a number of machine-guns at the head.

Just as the column entered our ambush area, a Japanese officer wearing a long sword at his side suddenly stopped by a ditch and shouted that there were some strange marks. At his shout, the enemy column came to a halt. Some of his subordinate officers ran towards the ditch and looked into it, cocking their heads. One of our comrades might have left footprints there. When the fight was over, our men searched the battlefield, uncovering the chests of the dead bodies of the Japanese officers; they found that the officer who had been wearing the long sword and had first discovered our traces by the ditch was the *Asura* himself, the commander of the "punitive" force.

The moment the *Asura* rose from stooping by the ditch, I gave the order to fire. In no time we had killed or captured over 200 enemy troops. The

Asura fell right there beside the ditch, without drawing his sword from its sheath. Our soldiers sneered, saying that if he had gone home and spent his leave in comfort, nothing would have happened to him. He died because of his blind arrogance.

That was the well-known Battle of Wukoujiang or Bairiping. Jo Myong Son wrote his reminiscences about the battle and I read it. After their bitter experience in that battle, the enemy did not dare to reappear in that area. From then on, the people called the villages on the shore of the Wukou the "off-limits villages", closed to the enemy. From then on we could conduct our political work there freely.

The *Tano* festival that year turned into a festivity celebrating the KPRA units' brilliant victories on the Wukou and in various other battles fought on the Tuman River.

The villages on the Tuman were enveloped in a joyful atmosphere, as if on liberation day. The young and middle-aged people prepared swings and wrestling grounds, all set to enjoy the coming *Tano* festival day to their hearts' content.

On our way back from the Battle of Wukoujiang, an interesting event took place. A peasant called on us, bringing with him a variety of food, cigarettes and wine. At first we thought they were aid goods sent by the people. To our surprise, however, the peasant waved his hands, saying that they were not his own gifts but holiday goods sent to General Kim Il Sung by the chief of police in Helong County. The information brought earlier by our scouts had proved to be true.

The gift package sent by the enemy contained also a sealed letter to O Paek Ryong. The enemy addressed to O Paek Ryong in particular, probably because they knew that I held him in trust. The letter said: "Having fought the Japanese empire for nearly ten years, you have no doubt found out just how strong the empire is. As the *Tano* festival approaches, what about taking our gift, giving up your fight, and paying an annual tribute to us? If you refuse to listen to this warning, you will be taught a bitter lesson."

Later on we found out that the warning letter had been written by Unami,

commander of the police “punitive” troops active in Helong County, on the instructions of the Japanese imperialists. Unami was concurrently holding the office of chief of the police affairs section in Helong County. When he was young, he had come over to Manchuria and worked as a policeman for the Japanese consulate, pledging himself to devote his life to the fight against the communists.

We first met with him in the autumn of 1932. On our return from the expedition to southern Manchuria, we had attacked the Dunhua county town, and he had fired back at us frantically from the police station of the Japanese consulate in the town. Thanks to his survival in that battle, he had been given a commendation from his superiors.

The Japanese army had an institution whereby the dead in battle, either in victory or defeat, was promoted to one rank higher, and received a large sum as a bonus. Even the wounded received a bonus. In a capitalist army controlled by money, there would be no other way of stimulating the fighters except with money. Ri To Son, too, got one more star on his shoulder-strap after his death.

Serving in different places in eastern Manchuria, Unami climbed up the police intelligence ladder and around 1939 became commander of a police “punitive” force of several hundred troops.

In his interview with journalists years later, Unami referred to the letter as a “warning note”, but to us it was something of a request. Having failed in their military attempt, the enemy tried to placate us in order to achieve their purpose.

To be effective, a warning note needs to be sent at an opportune moment: for instance, when the other side is on the defensive and in confusion, or when it is too exhausted to fight.

Unami, however, was mistaken both in his timing and in choosing his object. In those days we were on the offensive rather than on the defensive, and our armed struggle was at a high tide, not at a low ebb. The KPRA was strong in both its forces and tactics. He was obviously afraid of us, yet at the same time he seemed to be regarding us as an army running short of resources.

Unami sent us his warning note at a time when Tsutsui, the chief of the police department of North Hamgyong Province, went down to Samjang Subcounty, Musan County on the instructions of Minami, the Governor-General of Korea, with a lot of comfort goods and journalists. The purpose of the visit was to console the soldiers and policemen who had been hit by us. After the Battle of Pochonbo, too, Minami had dispatched the so-called inspection team, headed by the chief of the police affairs bureau of the Government-General of Korea, to the battlefield on a mission to investigate the situation after the battle.

Even though Unami had hectored us in his so-called warning note with his talk of a "bitter lesson", his words were nothing but a bluff. I told O Paek Ryong to write in reply to the letter. O Paek Ryong was not a particularly good writer, but that letter he wrote quite well. He said: "You have gone through all sorts of hardships for seven or eight years to 'punish' us, and where the hell did it get you? You have only supplied us with arms and food. What else did you manage to accomplish? It's you who are wretched, not us. You poor sods, why don't you stop your futile efforts and go back home where your wives and children are waiting for you? In a few days it'll be the *Tano* festival. I suggest you prepare some cake and wait for me. I'll be your guest and I'll teach you what you need to do." His letter was worded rather strongly.

I instructed that on the *Tano* festival day all the inhabitants living along the twelve-kilometre Yushidong valley, as well as the people of Huifengdong and its neighbouring villages, be invited to the sports event.

In Yushidong there's a tableland several hectares wide. We set up goalposts there and held our football game. The news that we had even held a football match, enjoying the holiday in a calm and composed manner right in the heart of Helong at a time when the enemy was massing its "punitive" troops, would have a far greater effect than a few battles or several hundred words of speech. The football match in the enemy-ruled area was another unique example of our political activities.

The football match between the soldiers of the revolutionary army and the

young villagers was great fun. Their technique was not worth mentioning and their teamwork was loose, but the players of both teams did their best, kicking at the air now and then, or slipping and falling down on the grassland, drawing bursts of laughter from the onlookers.

The old folks said it was the first time since the village had come into being that the villagers of Yushidong were able to laugh and forget their worries.

The match ended in a draw, but its political score was ten out of ten.

Both the swinging competition and the wrestling match were enjoyable to watch, and the joint amusement of army and people and art performances recorded a volley of encores, exceeding the scheduled time by far. The villagers expressed their gratitude to the revolutionary army for organizing the festival.

On that day scores of young villagers in Yushidong joined our ranks, proof that our political work had hit its mark with the villagers. We must regard sports events and entertainment as one form of political work.

In our country there are thousands of theatres, cinemas and cultural halls. If the assembly halls in institutions and enterprises are all added up, they will number tens of thousands that can serve as nice places for political work and mass cultural activities. Our officials, however, are not using them effectively. These halls have been built with a large investment, yet they are often left vacant, except for times when important events or meetings are taking place. How good it would be if officials were to organize in those nice buildings lectures on scientific developments or the current situation, oratorical contests or poetry recitals, and public meetings with noted scientists, writers, artists, sportsmen, heroes and labour innovators!

As guerrillas we had no microphones, theatres or radio stations, yet in spite of our difficult situation we conducted uninterrupted political activities among the popular masses by doing our best with what we had.

In the years that followed, the inhabitants of Yushidong and its vicinity helped our struggle actively. I think the young peasant brothers in Huifengdong must have given up opium and joined the fight as organization members.

The great leader's activities for the revolutionary transformation of the villages on the Tuman River were not confined to Helong. He paid close attention to the revolutionary movement in the homeland as well. Some days before the *Tano* festival he had come over to Peak Kuksa in Korea and held a meeting of the chiefs of underground revolutionary organizations and political operatives in the homeland. Peak Kuksa is situated on the Sodusu River, a tributary of the Tuman.

The principal architect of the meeting on Peak Kuksa, from preparation to convocation, was Ri Tong Gol, who was the chief of the political operatives team. Whenever this meeting was mentioned, the fatherly leader used to recollect Ri Tong Gol with a feeling of special affection and intimacy, always speaking highly of him as a loyal commander.

After the Battle of Taehongdan we moved to Helong, where we immediately held the meeting of the Headquarters' Party Committee and wrote off Comrade Ri Tong Gol's penalty. On the same day we entrusted him with responsibility for political work in the homeland.

The revolution in the homeland had a mountain of work lying ahead of it. The major task was to restore and expand as soon as possible the underground revolutionary organizations, destroyed in the "Hyesan incident". We sent Ri Tong Gol to the Musan area to build a strong network of underground organizations there similar to the ones Ri Je Sun and Pak Tal had once built.

I told him that I had plans to hold a meeting of the heads of underground revolutionary organizations and political operatives in the homeland at a suitable place in the Musan area, and I instructed him to make preparations for the meeting. Ri Tong Gol did a good job of the preparations. He first worked actively with the Korean inhabitants of the Chinese villages on the Tuman River; relying on their help, he then spent time in the homeland, finding out the organizational line and expediting the preparations for the meeting carefully.

Kim Jong Suk helped him greatly in those days, acting as a liaison between Headquarters and Ri. We sent her to the frontier villages on the

Tuman River for frequent contacts with Ri Tong Gol. She conveyed our instructions and intentions to him in time. In those days the peasants in Samjang Subcounty, Musan County, did not have enough farmland. They used to go over to China to grow their crops throughout the summer, returning in autumn to Korea with the crops they had harvested. The inhabitants of Musan called this “Jiandao farming”. Even among the peasants of Kapsan there were quite a few engaged in “Jiandao farming”. Kim Jong Suk worked first with the peasants who came to China for farming and through them got in touch with the homeland.

Ri Tong Gol and Kim Jong Suk played the leading role in converting Musan and Yonsa to a revolutionary line.

Less than 20 days after he had been assigned the task, Ri Tong Gol had already finished the preparations for the meeting.

On the day of the meeting, Ri Tong Gol took me across the Tuman River over a dam built by raftsmen, and we climbed up Peak Kuksa, the prearranged meeting place. At the meeting we discussed measures to expand underground revolutionary organizations and to set the Korean revolution on a path of continuous expansion.

After the meeting Ri Tong Gol made two suggestions to me: one was to expand and develop the organization he had set up in Samjang into the Yonsa area, as pointed out at the meeting, thus developing it into a model of Party and ARF organizations; the other was to invite the heads of the homeland organizations and all the other participants at the meeting to the *Tano* festival at Yushidong so that they could see for themselves our methods of political work.

I agreed to his suggestions.

After the meeting Ri Tong Gol accompanied us to Yushidong and celebrated the *Tano* festival. He then went to a secret rendezvous to pass on the policy set forth at the meeting on Peak Kuksa to ARF organizations. As he was preparing to leave for the Yonsa area in touch with a member of homeland organization, he was surprised by the enemy, wounded and captured.

After his arrest an organization member came to the Wukoujiang Secret Camp, carrying a secret note Ri Tong Gol had entrusted to him. The note

contained the ciphered account of the state of the underground organizations in Dagou, Antu County, and in Yushidong, Helong County, as well as in Samjang and Yonsa in Korea, together with his plan of activities in the Yonsa area. Apparently, Ri Tong Gol had made a note of necessary information from time to time and handed it over to the organization member as a precaution.

According to Pak Tal, even behind bars Ri Tong Gol encouraged the revolutionary comrades to struggle, communicating with them by knocking at the walls of his cell. He also fought well in court. Whenever he appeared in court, he demonstrated the spirit of a communist by shouting the slogan, "Long live the Korean revolution!"

Ri Tong Gol, like Kim Ju Hyon, had committed a serious mistake in the course of his work, but had corrected his error through revolutionary practice and ended his life honourably. A human being is not a machine, so he may commit errors in his work. How he corrects his errors depends on his ideology and preparedness. Ri Tong Gol had not only criticized himself sincerely for his errors, but had also trained himself ideologically after his dismissal from the post of regimental political commissar. That was why he was trusted again by his comrades before long.

A man's true worth reveals itself most clearly when he has been punished. When punished by his organization, an ill-prepared person usually complains about the punishment, saying it is too severe or undeserved or exaggerated instead of accepting it honestly. And he takes revenge in one way or the other upon those who have criticized him. He also gives a wide berth to his comrades in the revolution. What pleasure is there in such a life? If he keeps his heart shut to his comrades, he will drift away from his collective and end up dreaming of something else.

Enlightened people, however, always accept their comrades' criticism honestly and seriously, no matter how severe it may be. Such people regard criticism as a tonic.

Even after they were given the heavy penalty of being dismissed from the post of commander, Kim Ju Hyon and Ri Tong Gol did not lose heart or degenerate, but corrected their errors instead, for they had fully absorbed

their comrades' criticism and regarded it as something invigorating.

One's ability to accept comrades' criticism is a barometer of one's personality and self-enlightenment. Ri Tong Gol was a communist who can be held up as a model in terms of personality and edification.

Even after his death his painstaking efforts became hundreds of sparks on the Tuman River and in the depth of the homeland. After Ri Tong Gol's arrest, Kim Jong Suk went to the Yonsa area in his place to link the members of the Party and ARF organizationally and to develop these organizations as Ri had intended. The organizations constituted a great force in the all-people resistance.

As you can see, the Tuman River should never be viewed with indifference.

6. Women Fighters and Revolutionary Honour

Throughout his life the respected leader Comrade Kim Il Sung often recollected women guerrillas who had heroically laid down their lives in the battlefield and on the gallows, not seeing the day of national liberation, women who remained loyal to the revolution until death.

This section contains some of the fatherly leader's recollections on women fighters who sacrificed their lives without the slightest hesitation during the most trying period of our struggle for the sake of the revolution and who preserved their honour as communists to the very end.

I am greatly satisfied with the newly-built Revolutionary Martyrs Cemetery we have just seen. You have worked hard to build it.

How many women fighters are buried here? More than ten, certainly. That is as it should be. They all deserve to have their monuments set up and epitaphs inscribed on these monuments.

Ri Sun Hui fought well as a worker of the Young Communist League. She had once been the head of the Wangqing County children's department. I know her well. She was a woman of principle. Showing contempt for this young woman, the enemy attempted to squeeze the secret of our underground organizations out of her, but they failed. She was put to cruel torture, but she refused to divulge the secret. Such fighters as Ri Sun Hui must be held up as models for the coming generations.

Jang Kil Bu was not a guerrilla herself, but she lived a worthy life as the mother of Ma Tong Hui, a revolutionary. She also sent her daughter and daughter-in-law to the guerrilla army and helped other revolutionaries in their work. Her son, daughter and daughter-in-law all fell in the armed struggle. Everyone who fought, arms in hand, against the Japanese, is a hero or heroine. Had there been an official Hero award in those days, Mother Jang's children would have all been awarded the title of Hero. Therefore, as a

mother of one hero and two heroines, she must naturally be enshrined in the Revolutionary Martyrs Cemetery. Old as she was, Mother Jang also played an active part in socialist construction.

All the other women who are buried here fought, arms in hand, shoulder to shoulder with us men for the revolution against the Japanese.

Two women fighters are placed in the same row as Comrades Kim Chaek and Kang Kon. This is evidence of the position and role of our women in the anti-Japanese revolutionary struggle. Some veterans, particularly Kim Il, Rim Chun Chu and Choe Hyon, requested me earnestly to have Kim Jong Suk's bust put up there, saying that this was the unanimous desire of the people and of her comrades-in-arms.

I recommended Choe Hui Suk for that row. She was an honourable fighter who deserves her place in the top row. In view of their friendship during the anti-Japanese revolution, it is also natural that she should be placed in the same row with Kim Jong Suk. When Kim Jong Suk was carrying out her difficult task in the enemy-ruled Taoquanli area, Choe Hui Suk, who was active in Yaofangzi, helped her in secret. Kim Jong Suk was able to apply herself to the work of building organizations at Sinpha because Choe Hui Suk in Yaofangzi was of such great help to her. Also, in the autumn of 1939, when a large number of uniforms were needed in the Wukoujiang area, Choe Hui Suk did a great job while working hand in hand with Kim Jong Suk. In recognition of her high sense of responsibility and success in completing this job, I made a present of a gold ring and a watch to her.

Choe Hui Suk was a ranking veteran among women fighters of the Korean People's Revolutionary Army. She joined the army probably in 1932. This was when the anti-Japanese armed forces were being organized throughout the counties of eastern Manchuria, wasn't it? There were many women fighters in the KPRA, but only a few of them had enlisted as early as 1932. A soldier who took up arms in 1932 is worthy of being treated as a veteran.

As far as I remember, I met her first in the spring of 1936. In that spring many women who had been fighting in the units active in Yanji and Helong

were admitted into our main force. Kim Jong Suk and Choe Hui Suk were among them.

All the women fighters addressed Choe Hui Suk as “elder sister”. Many men fighters did too. By age, she was an elder sister to most of us. She was several years older than I. I think among the women soldiers she was one of the elders, next to Kim Myong Hwa and Jang Chol Gu.

She was called “elder sister”, not just because she was older, but also because she was always so exemplary in her everyday life and in carrying out her duties. And she took good care of her comrades-in-arms. She had worked for several years in regional organizations, such as the Young Communist League and Women’s Association, and among the Chinese anti-Japanese units. In the course of all this she had acquired high political qualifications and leadership ability, so I used to give her a lot of difficult assignments. She continued to work as the head of the sewing unit of the KPRA after the Xiaohaerbaling meeting because she enjoyed our trust.

The commanding officers and soldiers of the main force constantly marvelled at her absolute loyalty and revolutionary spirit. Everything she did touched the hearts of her comrades-in-arms. More than once I was moved by her noble sense of morality and by her personality. During the Arduous March I saw her mending the torn uniforms of her comrades by the campfire, warming her frozen fingers now and again, in the dead of night when the others were all asleep. She never rested for a few days before finishing any job, even if it meant having to allay her hunger with water. Whenever we talked about success in her work, she always gave credit to her comrades-in-arms for it. I can still remember her embarrassment on receiving her gold ring and watch at the awards ceremony for men and women of merit as she stammered out: “Many of us worked hard to make uniforms. If I alone am accorded special treatment in this way. ...”

After the Xiaohaerbaling meeting, she took part in small-unit operations. On her way to Headquarters to convey some important information one day, she encountered “punitive” enemy troops, who were going over the mountains with a fine-tooth comb in search of us.

Discovering her small unit, the enemy pursued them tenaciously to capture the guerrillas. She was surrounded, got a bullet through her leg and was captured.

The enemy put her to torture brutal beyond all description to extract the secret information from her. They even gouged out her eyes. No threats or torture, however, could break her revolutionary spirit.

Just before her death she shouted:

"I have no eyes, but I can still see victory in the revolution!"

Enraged by her shout, the enemy carved out her heart to see what sort of heart a communist had. What difference is there between the heart of a revolutionary and that of others? A heart bears no marks to indicate a revolutionary or a traitor. The heart of a revolutionary beats for his country, nation and comrades-in-arms, whereas the heart of a traitor beats only for himself.

I was told that as soon as they took Choe Hui Suk prisoner, the enemy robbed her of the gold ring that we had awarded her. Nevertheless, they could not take away her cherished trust in us and her loyalty to us.

Even after they had torn out her heart, they failed to understand how she could have remained so honourable.

Those who do not love their country with a pure heart can never know what revolutionary honour is, nor can they understand the noble and beautiful spiritual world that grows out of a communist outlook on life.

At the news of Choe Hui Suk's death, all of us mourned, bitter with regret that she had died without seeing the day of national liberation for which she had longed so eagerly. The women guerrillas were so overcome with grief that they could no longer eat.

I was lost in sorrow for a long time.

However, we derived great strength from her words, "I can still see victory in the revolution!" She had shouted this under the worst imaginable circumstances, manacled as she was and with her eyes gouged out by the enemy. What an unbreakable, proud revolutionary spirit shines through these words! Not everyone could shout such words of defiance under similar circumstances. These are famous words, the kind that can be spoken only by

those convinced of the validity and truth of their cause, only by fighters with a strong sense of revolutionary honour. The words are the very summary of the life of the woman fighter Choe Hui Suk.

"I can still see victory in the revolution!"–this has now become the maxim of our people, especially our younger generation, which symbolizes revolutionary optimism. This woman fighter's shout still rings in the minds of our people.

I value optimism and love optimistic people. "There will be a way out even if the sky falls in!" is one of my important mottoes. Because I am an optimist myself, I have been able to go through hell and high water without vacillation or deviation and continue to lead the revolution and construction in good health today.

I still remember the words that Choe Hui Suk, robbed of her eyes, shouted at the last moment of her life because they represent the strong will and unshakeable conviction of all Korean communists.

I repeat that Choe Hui Suk is a woman revolutionary who can take her place proudly in the first line of our revolutionary ranks amongst all the others who overcame trying ordeals.

Pak Won Chun, Choe Hui Suk's husband, served a prison term in Sodaemun Prison.

There were many other women fighters who died with enormous courage, as Choe Hui Suk did.

An Sun Hwa also ended her life heroically. It is not easy to die a heroic death.

An Sun Hwa was Ri Pong Su's wife. They fought in the same unit, her husband working as the surgeon and she as the head of the sewing unit.

They had had five children. All of them, however, were either killed or separated from their parents during the guerrilla fighting. Their first child, who had all his toes amputated because of frostbite, was sent to the Soviet Union along with other serious cases; the second died of measles, and the third was stabbed to death with a bayonet by the Japanese who attacked the guerrilla base. The fourth starved to death, and the fifth was given to another

family. There is no knowing whether he is alive or dead, or where he lives. Since Ri Pong Su's reminiscences have been published on several occasions, the fifth child, if still alive, could be expected to get in touch with his father, but I have not heard of this happening yet.

The fifth child, if given to another family before he was two years old, may well not know about his real parents. His foster parents may not have told him that he had been adopted.

An Sun Hwa was captured by the enemy in the spring of 1938. One day when the guerrillas in the secret camp were preparing to leave for southern Manchuria by order of Headquarters, the enemy's "punitive" force suddenly pounced upon the camp.

The secret camp at that time was staffed mainly by medical personnel and members of the sewing unit. An Sun Hwa was captured by the enemy and put through cruel suffering.

The enemy tortured her, demanding the whereabouts of the guerrillas, foodstuffs, ammunition and medicine stores. The commander of the "punitive" force also tried enticing her with honeyed words, saying it was pointless for her to shed her blood and waste her precious young life in a hopeless cause.

Had An Sun Hwa answered their questions obediently, afraid of torture, the enemy would not have killed her.

The Japanese in those days used the method of offering "generous treatment" to defectors in order to disintegrate our revolutionary ranks. A defector could escape death by writing down his guarantor's name and putting his thumbmark on the defector's application, even if he had been engaged in armed resistance and had been shouting "Down with Japanese Imperialism" only the day before.

It was really great that An Sun Hwa, a frail woman, should have resisted the enemy's cajoling and endured their torture. The enemy kicked her, stomped on her and pulled out her hair. As she stubbornly resisted, yelling "You, beasts!", "You, fiends!" at them, the enemy drove wooden stakes into her chest and belly, saying they would not waste bullets to kill her.

A man instinctively makes a face if a thorn pierces the palm of his hand.

What agony An Sun Hwa must have suffered as the stakes were driven through her body, tearing into her flesh and bones!

Despite the pain, however, An Sun Hwa never gave up her principles as a revolutionary. She said what she wanted to say and remained faithful to her convictions to the end. The moment the stakes penetrated her body, she shouted with all the strength she could muster, “Long live the Korean revolution!” and “Long live the emancipation of women!”

After her death, her comrades-in-arms took everything out of her knapsack to dispose of her few possessions. Among these was a serge skirt that her husband Ri Pong Su had bought her with the money he had earned as a stevedore in Vladivostok towards the end of the 1920s, as well as a desk cloth she had not finished knitting.

She had kept her serge skirt in her knapsack without wearing it for ten years, I was told. Why had she kept it so carefully? She must have wanted to wear it after the country was liberated. This fact alone shows us how firmly convinced she was of the coming victory in the revolution. The desk cloth she knitted at odd moments with thread she had unravelled from a worn-out shirt must also have been intended to be spread over her husband’s desk after the liberation of the fatherland.

When covering her dead body with that serge skirt, her husband sobbed bitterly at the sight of the pleats of the skirt, which were still perfectly straight after ten years.

In the anti-Japanese armed units fighting in northern Manchuria also there were many women fighters like Choe Hui Suk and An Sun Hwa.

Han Ju Ae is a good example of how strongly devoted Korean women fighters in northern Manchuria were to their revolutionary principles. In charge of the sewing unit, Han Ju Ae was making padded uniforms of the guerrillas at a service camp. One day, caught in a sudden attack on the camp by the enemy’s “punitive” force, she was captured with her little daughter. The Japanese seized her while she was firing back hopelessly at the “punitive” troops, deliberately exposing herself to them in order to give her comrades-in-arms the chance to get away safely.

She was kept behind bars for several months. The enemy put mother and daughter into separate cells, saying it was an “extravagance” to keep mother and daughter in the same cell. In order to bring Han Ju Ae to her knees, they brought her daughter to meet her mother occasionally in an attempt to take advantage of Han Ju Ae’s maternal love. No enemy trickery, however, could make her abandon her revolutionary principles.

The enemy finally shot her on the bank of the Ussuri River. The interrogators at the Japanese gendarmerie had told her that they would spare her life if she admitted that she repented of what she had done, but she refused to give in to the last.

Eight members of a sewing unit of the guerrilla army active in northern Manchuria, including An Sun Bok and Ri Pong Son, while fighting against the enemy that was closing in on them, threw themselves into the deep waters of the Mudan River before they could be captured. There was a similar instance also among the women fighters of the guerrilla army in eastern Manchuria. On their way to Neidaoshan, seven young women fighters encircled by the enemy committed suicide by drowning themselves into the Fuer River. Their heroic death created yet another legend in the history of the anti-Japanese revolution.

One year when I was visiting China I saw and was deeply moved by a film describing the struggle of the eight women martyrs of Mudanjiang.

Not only the women fighters in northern Manchuria, but also Ri Sun Jol, a dear “sister” to the guerrillas in southern Manchuria, kept her honour as a revolutionary.

Another heroine, Kim Su Bok, was arrested and killed while conducting underground activities in Zhujingdong, Changbai County.

A hero or heroine is not a special being. Ordinary women, such as Choe Hui Suk, An Sun Hwa and the seven women martyrs of eastern Manchuria, can also become heroines.

When Jo Ok Hui, chairwoman of the Women’s Union of Pyoksong County, was captured and killed by the enemy while fighting as a guerrilla in an enemy-held area during the strategic retreat in the Fatherland Liberation

War, we awarded her the title of Hero of the Republic. She also was a woman of strong will, loyal to the revolution just as Choe Hui Suk and An Sun Hwa had been. The enemy pulled out her fingernails and toe nails, gouged out her eyes, cut off her breasts and burned her with a red-hot iron rod. However, she never succumbed, but denounced them and died a heroic death, shouting "Long live the Workers' Party of Korea!"

How many of the enemy might Jo Ok Hui have killed–if any–while waging the guerrilla struggle? We value her high spirit and the revolutionary constancy with which she held her head high and declared the downfall of the enemy on her way to the execution site, rather than the number of enemy she actually killed. This was why we decided to honour her with the title of Hero. How marvellous it is that an ordinary woman, who had been engaged in farming and the work of Women's Union, should have crowned the last moment of her life with such honour! I wanted to bring her to prominence in the eyes of our own people and to prod the conscience of world community, so I had a film made about her. I also set up her statue and named the cooperative farm in her native village after her.

The respected leader Comrade Kim Il Sung, while looking around the Korean Revolution Museum, paused for a long while before a braid of hair on display there. It belonged to the anti-Japanese fighter Ri Kye Sun. She had cut the braid off at the age of 16 and sent it to her mother as proof of her strong desire to devote herself to the revolution.

Looking at the braid for a long time that day, the great leader earnestly requested that it be carefully looked after, for it was a precious piece of history. Later he warmly recollected Ri Kye Sun.

The story of the hair is eloquent proof of what a great and laudable revolutionary Comrade Ri Kye Sun was. Looking at it, I think of the pure-hearted, strong-willed devotion of all Korean mothers, sisters and women revolutionaries to their principles.

Korean women are outwardly gentle, but strong-minded on the inside. They are also strongly faithful to their fundamental beliefs. I keenly felt this

in the course of our revolutionary struggle against the Japanese. I must say that Ri Kye Sun's hair symbolizes the faith of all our women revolutionaries.

When I was carrying out the underground struggle in Manchuria, my mother had placed her hair inside my shoes, the cut-off hair she had kept carefully for several years since in her days in Korea. One cold winter day I trudged across an uninhabited region in a raging snowstorm. I walked a long distance, yet my feet were not cold; on the contrary, the longer I walked, the more warmth I felt in the soles of my feet. Reaching my destination, I pulled off my shoes, inspected them and found my mother's hair lining the interior.

I thought at that moment that there is no greater affection than that of a mother. My mother's hair inside my shoes was the truest manifestation of her maternal love.

When the Korean Provisional Government in Shanghai was set up and Independence Army organizations such as *Jongui-bu*, *Chamui-bu* and *Sinmin-bu* came into being in Northeast China, imposing taxes on the Korean residents, a considerable number of Korean women sold their hair for independence contributions, I was told. Their hair was a symbol of their patriotism.

I am recounting past events related to hair while talking about Ri Kye Sun because her hair can give us a full picture of her personality.

Comrades Kim Il and Pak Yong Sun also know about her because they fought together with her. If you want to collect materials about Ri Kye Sun, you had better interview the First Vice-Premier Kim Il and Comrade Pak Yong Sun. Some people claim it's dull talking to Kim Il because he is so taciturn. They don't know him well enough. Though he never boasts of himself, Kim Il is loud and voluble in praise of others.

Ri Kye Sun took the road to revolution in the wake of her brother, Ri Ji Chun. When I was in the Jilin Yuwen Middle School, Ri Ji Chun studied at a normal school in Jilin and was engaged in the revolutionary struggle under our guidance. Later, when he returned to Helong where his parents lived to guide the work of the Young Communist League there, he was arrested and killed by the enemy. The enemy set fire to his dead body, so that he was killed twice, so to speak.

Ri Kye Sun heard of her brother's death in the Yulangcun guerrilla zone, where she had been staying.

At dawn the following day she untied her hair, cut it off and braided it. She sent the braid to her mother with the following note:

"Mother! What pain you must be feeling at Brother's death in addition to my leaving home!

"Please do not grieve over it, though. Do not show your tears to the enemy.

"I am sending you my braid, Mother. I may not come back to see you for a long time. Look on this braid as if it were me. With all my heart I wish you the best of health till the day of victory in the revolution!"

This was her farewell to her mother. There was no doubt that she was determined to devote the rest of her life to the revolution.

According to Pak Yong Sun, who did underground work in Helong for several years, since her childhood Ri Kye Sun had been loved by many people for her revolutionary awareness and extraordinary talents.

In the summer of 1933 she was instructed by the party organization to go to Longjing City for underground activities. Her main task was to restore the wrecked underground organizations and form new ones where there were none. The Longjing area, one of the Japanese major strongholds, was infested with enemy soldiers, policemen and secret agents. Japanese intelligence agencies there had highly sensitive tentacles.

The fact that the revolutionary organization in the guerrilla zone dispatched Ri Kye Sun, who did not have much experience in underground work, to that place showed how much confidence it placed in her.

In those days the party, the Women's Association, the Children's Vanguard and other mass organizations in Longjing City had been destroyed and most of their members were behind bars.

With strong determination to solve everything on her own, Ri Kye Sun became an odd-job woman in a noodle shop, a popular place frequented by many people. No one would have thought that a country-woman doing odd jobs in the kitchen of a noodle shop, her face stained with soot, might be an

underground operative from the Communist Party. The noodle shop was an ideal base for her activities.

Ri Kye Sun fetched water, washed clothes and the dishes and did whatever her employer told her. Her employer felt lucky to have such a good servant.

In order to restore the destroyed organizations and build new ones, Ri Kye Sun needed a job requiring her to work outdoors all day long. For this purpose, the job of delivering noodles would be perfect. In those days rich and influential families used to order noodles and have them delivered to their door. Sitting cross-legged in their homes, they would order several plates of potato-starch noodles and meat soup, which the delivery men then carried in separate containers on large wooden trays to their homes.

By earning the confidence of the wife of her employer, Ri Kye Sun took the job of delivery woman. Whenever she went out to deliver noodles she used to meet members of various organizations at odd moments. In the meantime, she set out to restore the Children's Vanguard organizations. Her job, however, was not as easy as one might think, for she had to walk several miles a day, carrying the wooden tray full of noodles on her head. One day, hurrying to a customer's house with the wooden tray on her head, she suddenly noticed a Japanese police van rushing towards her. In trying to dodge it, she dropped the tray and broke all the noodle dishes.

Because of this accident, she was given a dressing down and taken off the delivery service. She did not despair, however; after her daily work in the kitchen was over, she practised walking with a wooden tray full of stones on her head in the back yard of the noodle shop till late at night, in spite of her fatigue.

Her great enthusiasm won her employer's sympathy.

Probably she was about 17 years old at that time.

By the time they were 15 or 16 the women fighters had already launched themselves into political activities. In their teens, they would make stirring speeches, do underground work in the enemy-ruled areas and participate in building organizations. At that age they had a good knowledge of the world. As a generation that had grown up through hardships brought on by the loss

of their country, they were more developed than young people nowadays.

This does not mean, however, that everyone who experiences hardships will automatically understand the world before anyone else, or commit himself to fighting. What is important is one's ideology. Only when one is prepared ideologically can one make an early revolutionary start and render distinguished service in the revolution. One cannot carry out the revolution unless one is sound ideologically. Ri Kye Sun was loyal to the revolution because she was a woman of sound ideology.

Some people nowadays turn a deaf ear to what 20-year-olds have to say, dismissing them as "babies smelling of their mothers' milk".

Even those dealing with personnel management often consider young people in their twenties to be still ignorant of world affairs. They think that only people in their thirties, forties and fifties are qualified to be cadres. They are grossly mistaken. Young people in their twenties, if entrusted with responsibilities, are perfectly able to discharge them. I keenly experienced this in the struggle to build the Party, the state and the army immediately after liberation.

During the anti-Japanese revolution young people in their twenties worked as county or provincial party secretaries, division commanders and corps commanders. I myself commanded the revolutionary army in my twenties. If young people are not promoted to leadership, the ranks of our cadres may become senile and our advance will lose momentum. The old, middle-aged and young must be properly combined when cadres are being promoted.

Ri Kye Sun came into the limelight in eastern Manchuria when her husband Kim Il Hwan, who was the party secretary of Helong County, was killed by the chauvinists on a false charge of involvement in the "Minsaengdan". At that time the people in the Jiandao area all cursed and hated those who had masterminded the murder of her husband and sympathized with her.

Many people thought that Ri Kye Sun might abandon the revolution or leave the guerrilla zone, disillusioned by the doings of the party leadership in eastern Manchuria. In those days many organization members and guerrillas in Jiandao abhorred the Leftist, reckless acts of the eastern Manchuria party

leadership and turned their backs on the guerrilla zone. The ultra-Leftist anti-"Minsaengdan" struggle, in fact, tarnished the image of all communists.

An ordinary woman would have left the guerrilla zone, disgusted at the revolution, or might have felt disheartened and idled away her time lamenting over her lot. Ri Kye Sun, on the contrary, braced herself with strong determination and strove to discharge her duty so as to contribute to the revolution and prove that her husband, a man of rectitude and conscience, had done nothing to disgrace the revolution.

A famine in the Chechangzi guerrilla zone left her undernourished in the last month of her pregnancy. In spite of this, she gathered edible herbs and stripped off tree bark almost every day for the starving invalids in the guerrilla zone. She worried more about them than about herself and the new life to come. When the source of this wild food ran short, she caught frogs and gathered spawn for people on the verge of starvation.

When the baby was born, she could not yield milk. To make matters worse, the guerrilla zone was dissolved. After putting her little daughter in the care of her mother-in-law, who was leaving for the enemy-ruled area, Ri Kye Sun joined the guerrilla army. The baby she had handed over to her mother-in-law was the daughter of Kim Il Hwan, born after his death.

Her parting with her daughter was a tearful event. The infant was kicking, refusing to be torn from her mother's embrace, her mother-in-law weeping and Ri Kye Sun herself turning back and hugging her daughter again and again, sobbing in pity for her baby. It was a tragic parting indeed!

When relatives, friends and comrades-in-arms had to go in different directions because of the dissolution of the guerrilla zone, everyone bid farewell to each other in tears, just as Ri Kye Sun did.

Ri Kye Sun's mother-in-law is said to have taken great pains to bring up her granddaughter. Suckling on charity could be done once or twice, but not constantly. So her mother-in-law herself had to chew up grains of barley or maize, then put them into the baby's mouth, I was told.

Ri Kye Sun was a fighter who took up arms with unbearable misery and pain in her heart. She joined our unit in Fusong.

Some time after her enlistment we sent her to a field hospital because she was suffering from frostbite and unable to fight in the combat unit. At first she refused to go, begging me in tears to be allowed to remain on the battle front.

However, I did not listen to her entreaties. I told her: "You don't seem to know how dreadful frostbite can be. You will have many chances to fight later, but you must go to hospital right now. My father also died as a result of cold injuries. How useful will you be if all of your toes rot and you become a cripple, walking on crutches?" At this, she reluctantly agreed to get treatment at the hospital.

She was treated at the field hospital of the Heixiazigou Secret Camp quite near Mt. Paektu. On the Lunar New Year's Day, 1937, I looked around the service camps in the Hengshan area. On that day the members of the weapons repair shop headed by Pak Yong Sun made potato-starch noodles for me with a noodle press made of tin.

When we went to the hospital, Ri Kye Sun bustled about, treating us to food. According to Doctor Song, Ri Kye Sun was not content to merely get treatment, but became nurse and cook on her own, overtiring herself.

Leaving the hospital I told Ri Kye Sun to get treatment only and refrain from doing anything else. I warned her in a half threatening tone that otherwise she would never be cured.

I never saw her again after that. I only sent letters and aid goods to those in the hospital through messengers on several occasions.

While we were away from the Mt. Paektu area for a while, the enemy hurled "punitive" troops at the service camps of our unit. The hospital in charge of Doctor Song was also taken by surprise. Pak Sun Il fell in the battle and Ri Kye Sun was captured by the enemy and dragged to Changbai County. Only Ri Tu Su survived.

Unaware of the incident, I sent Kim Jong Phil and Han Cho Nam as messengers to carry food to the comrades in the hospital. I told the messengers that they should bring all the patients back, believing that they would have been cured of their illness. They returned with only Ri Tu Su, however, who had changed beyond recognition and looked like an animal. Only then

did we find out about the calamity that had befallen the field hospital.

I sent reconnaissance teams to various places to find out Ri Kye Sun's whereabouts and fate. They all brought me the heart-rending news that she had been killed ten days or so after her capture. Members of the reconnaissance team met some Changbai people who had said they had witnessed Ri Kye Sun's death.

According to them, Ri Kye Sun was shot to death on a market day. The enemy had gathered all the local residents in a school playground, boasting that a "converted" woman of the communist army would make a public "recantation". They had also herded all the peddlers from Hyesan into the playground.

Why had Ri Kye Sun asked the enemy to give her an official opportunity for addressing the local people? I think we can see here the true nature of Ri Kye Sun as a communist. She wanted the people all together in the playground because she intended to bid farewell to them by speaking up for the revolution and against the Japanese. Had she truly recanted, the enemy might have spared her life. Ri Kye Sun, however, had not chosen such a despicable course of action, but was prepared to face death. Anyone ready to die fears neither guns nor swords and feels free to say whatever he wants.

She addressed the assembled people with the words: "I will die, but the Korean People's Revolutionary Army is strong and its Commander is in good health. No force in the world can defeat the KPRA. The day when Japanese imperialism is destroyed and our fatherland is liberated is very close at hand. All of you must unite in mind and body, rise up against enemy suppression and fight the war of resistance to the Japanese."

Ri Kye Sun did her best to the last moment of her life to discharge her mission and duty as a servant, educator and propagandist faithful to the people.

What a great surprise it must have been to the enemy to hear the woman of the communist army speaking up for revolution against the Japanese, quite contrary to their bragging that she would "recant".

I'm told the old-time inhabitants of Changbai still remember vividly the

sight they witnessed that time. This means Ri Kye Sun's speech obviously made a great impact on the inhabitants of the area.

Ri Kye Sun became a famous woman fighter because she illuminated her last moments with such a heroic deed. The crowning glory of her life was her last moment. It can be said that the high point in one's life means the time when a person's mental powers and activities reach their apex. The arrival of this high point varies with people. Some may experience it in their twenties, some in their fifties, and still others in their sixties or seventies.

People like Ri Kye Sun and Choe Hui Suk who end their lives brilliantly become a part of history for ever, while those who win fame but meet their last moment with dishonour sink into oblivion.

That is why I still remember Ri Kye Sun. We can be rightly proud of such a woman fighter as Ri Kye Sun in the eyes of the world. Her heroic life can be a good theme for a revolutionary novel or film. She was a true daughter of the Korean nation and the perfect model of a woman revolutionary.

Ri Kye Sun's mother had worried herself sick for a long time because she did not know whether her granddaughter, Ri Kye Sun's daughter, was alive or dead. Only after the Korean War did she find out that her granddaughter was studying at Kim Il Sung University. It was then that she handed over her daughter's braid to her granddaughter. The braid that had been handed back and forth over three generations was a symbol of the valuable life of martyr Ri Kye Sun. The mother, whose face and voice had faded from the memory of her daughter because of their forced separation when the daughter was still only a baby, coming back to her daughter as a braid of hair–what a tragic meeting it is! The daughter wept and wept, rubbing her cheek against the braid.

Ri Kye Sun's daughter is now faithfully carrying forward the revolution her parents pioneered at the cost of their lives.

There would be no end if we were to enumerate all the examples of women fighters who lived up to their dignity and honour as revolutionaries by sacrificing their lives without the slightest hesitation.

My assertion that women push forward one wheel of the revolution is not

an abstract notion. It is based on the history of the bloody revolutionary struggle against the Japanese and on my own actual experiences as a direct participant in the emancipation of Korean women, as well as an eyewitness to their struggle.

CHAPTER 21

Roar of Gunfire in the Large-Unit Circling Operations

A Woman Came to Visit the Secret Camp

Chinese Landlord Liu Tong-shi

Confronted by Hundreds of Thousands

of “Punitive” Troops

O Jung Hup and His 7th Regiment

The Man from Phyongan Province

“Let Us Defend the Soviet Union with Arms!”

The End of the “Maeda Punitive Force”

July 1939–March 1940

1. A Woman Came to Visit the Secret Camp

One day in the autumn of 1956 the secretary of the great leader Comrade Kim Il Sung received a long phone call from the secretary-general of the North Hamgyong Provincial People's Committee. The message was that the secretary-general was sending a woman working at the creche of the Hakpho Coal Mine to Pyongyang because she said she had fought in the Korean People's Revolutionary Army before liberation and had eagerly requested him to let her meet the fatherly leader.

A few days later the woman called at the building of the Cabinet. When the great leader's secretary asked her why she had come, she barely managed to answer, with tears in her eyes: "Simply because I'm eager to see. ..."

At that time the great leader was very busy working with a foreign delegation. When he had finished the work, his secretary reported about the woman's visit. Hearing this, the leader said, "Ji Sun Ok, Kang Hung Sok's wife... so she is still alive," and sank into deep thought.

What sort of a woman was Ji Sun Ok? We compiled the following account of Ji Sun Ok's activities by combining the fatherly leader's remarks on three occasions: in May 1972, as he looked around the Korean Revolution Museum; in March 1976, while attending the music and dance epic, *Large-Unit Circling Operations*; and in October 1985, when he was inspecting the Revolutionary Martyrs Cemetery on Mt. Taesong.

I suppose it was in the summer of 1939 that this happened, for we had just wound up our successful offensive in the Musan area and were conducting military and political activities in the northeastern area of Mt. Paektu. I was giving guidance to the 8th Regiment.

One day O Jung Hup, commander of the 7th Regiment, came to see me with a report about the state of affairs in his unit. Finishing his report, he added that on his way to Headquarters he had met Kang Hung Sok's wife on the upper reaches of the Wukou River and had brought her to the secret camp

of the 8th Regiment. This was Ji Sun Ok.

When she suddenly appeared in our secret camp, saying she had come because of her desperate longing to see her husband, we all admired her passion.

The mountain areas along the Songhua and Wukou Rivers were dangerous zones of guerrilla activity, crawling with enemy soldiers, policemen and spies. One might easily die from a stray bullet, or be executed on a charge of being "in secret contact with communist bandits". Yet despite such dangers she, a lone woman, had come to see her husband. It was natural that we should admire her courage.

Kang Hung Sok, Ji Sun Ok's husband, was famous not only as a crack shot but also as a devoted husband. His knapsack was rumoured to be full of letters addressed to his wife. They had married as teenagers, and soon after the wedding Kang had left home to join the revolution. Since then he had not seen his wife for nearly ten years. Ji Sun Ok also yearned greatly for her husband.

The Japanese imperialists, it was found out later on, had made inquiries into this through intelligence channels and inveigled Ji Sun Ok into espionage activities under threat.

Anyhow, it was going to be a happy event for Kang Hung Sok to hold a dramatic reunion with his wife.

Kang Hung Sok was not with us just then because he was out on a mission to obtain provisions, so we sent him word to come back to Headquarters immediately.

When I met Ji Sun Ok, I found her neat in appearance and well-mannered. I had lunch with her that day. My men told her that the char on the table had been caught for her by the General himself, and asked her to help herself. Ji Sun Ok seemed to be astonished to hear this, but she took only a few spoonfuls. No matter how we encouraged her to take more, it was of no avail.

I made one woman guerrilla keep her company. They seemed to have talked a lot throughout the night, sleeping under the same blanket.

With the couple's reunion approaching, everyone was boisterous, as if

personally awaiting a happy event. This was the first reunion of a young married couple in nearly a decade of tough armed struggle. I was eager to congratulate them too. Everyone was waiting with impatience for Kang Hung Sok's return.

Having met Ji Sun Ok, however, I was suspicious about one thing: How had she found out her husband's whereabouts and come to this mountain, a place that was virtually the jaws of death? How had she discovered the exact location of our unit? Others who talked with her also said that she was inconsistent in her statements.

Three or four days after her arrival at the secret camp, O Jung Hup and O Paek Ryong came rushing over to me, out of breath. O Jung Hup reported that out of his tender heart he had brought a spy of the Japanese imperialists to Headquarters without checking out her identity first. The report was like a bolt from the blue. He begged my pardon. O Paek Ryong said it was an evil thing that the wife of a platoon leader in the revolutionary army should have come as a spy for the Japanese instead of coming to help the guerrillas. His suggestion was that we shoot her there and then.

They told me that the woman guerrilla in whose tent Ji was staying had become suspicious about her because her conduct was so dubious and her statements were so incoherent. So in the middle of the night she had closely examined Ji's lined garment and had discovered a packet of poison stitched into the lining. At that time our comrades were so used to the enemy's poisoning schemes that they could easily discern that sort of thing.

When I asked whether Ji Sun Ok knew that the poison packet had been found, they said no, but added that they were keeping a close watch on her.

I was greatly shocked by this incident and could not calm myself down for quite a while. As a matter of fact, there had been other instances of either Japanese spies or saboteurs slipping into our unit and being exposed. And many of the exposed spies were people from the lower classes, who in general should not have been hostile to us. The Japanese imperialists sent even simple-hearted farm servants or workers to us to act as their spies.

However, there was no precedent for training as a spy a woman who had

sent her husband to the revolutionary army, the wife of a platoon leader at that, and dispatching her to our military camp. The appearance of such a person on an espionage mission was a new trick indeed. Those working in Japanese intelligence services were really base and cunning.

Having received O Jung Hup's report, I wondered how Kang Hung Sok would take this astonishing news. There was great danger of his marriage breaking up.

Despite the objections of O Jung Hup and O Paek Ryong, I decided to meet Ji Sun Ok again.

I had a comparatively long talk with her. I asked her about Kang Hung Sok's family, about the hardships she had undergone on her way to look for the revolutionary army and about her maiden home.

The topic of our conversation naturally changed to Kang Hung Sok. When I said that Kang Hung Sok would be coming back to camp the next day or the day after, Ji Sun Ok suddenly burst into tears, covering her face with her hands. She then tore off the stitched part of her coat and took out the poison packet. Shivering all over, she said, "General, I'm a wretched woman who must be punished by God. I deserve death."

I got her to drink some water and calmed her down somewhat. Then I said: "It's a good thing that you confessed. The revolutionary army shows leniency to those who frankly confess their crimes. Moreover, you are the wife of platoon leader Kang Hung Sok. Don't be afraid and tell me everything. Tell me in detail how you became a spy, what kind of training they gave you after you became a spy and what tasks you were given before you set out to find the revolutionary army."

Ji Sun Ok confessed everything in detail and talked about how she had got to the mountain.

O Paek Ryong, who witnessed this scene, said later in recollection:

"At that moment I felt as if my life had been shortened by ten years. A cold shiver ran down my spine and my whole body broke into a cold sweat. How dared she appear before the General with poison! What would have happened if she had sneaked it into the cooking pot or rice

bowls? That little woman was on the verge of spoiling the entire Korean revolution! The mere thought of it still makes me shudder."

For this reason the anti-Japanese fighters are still reluctant to think of Ji Sun Ok even today.

The confidential documents prepared by the Japanese consul in Hunchun contain the following information about the aim of sending Ji Sun Ok as a spy, and about other things:

The circumstances of sending her

1. The content of order

(1) Disrupt the guerrilla ranks after catching Kang Hung Sok in mesh.

(2) Poison senior officers.

(3) When interrogated by the guerrillas, the agent should state that she has come to the mountains to see her husband under the coercion of her parents.

2. Method of communication

The agent should report about herself and the guerrillas directly to Police Field Officer Katada of the secret service section, or to Police Lieutenant Minami.

3. Date, time and place of entering the mountains

Obtained her parents' approval for this operation, gave her all the necessary information in Yanji for five days, from August 5 to 9, and sent her to the mountains on August 10, accompanied by a man in charge of her. Let her proceed to her destination–Height 1088 southwest of Menghedong, Helong County, and Yilan, west of this, both considered to be guerrilla hide-outs (judging from the fact that at 10 p.m. on August 8, 120 soldiers of Kim Il Sung's main-force unit raided Longzecun, Helong County and fled into the thick forests in the southwest).

4. Estimated date of return

An estimated two to three months are needed. (Secret information of Hunchun consul No. 186, July 26, Showa 15 (1940), report from Hunchun consul Kiuchi Tadao)

The Japanese imperialist special service agency called Ji Sun Ok a "live agent". A "live agent" is a term used in Sun-tzu's *Art of War*. It means an agent who must come back alive without fail. Judging from the fact that the enemy chose Ji Sun Ok as a "live agent", it seems they expected a great deal from her. They might have intended to use her as a professional agent later.

The enemy said to Ji Sun Ok: "Your husband as a machine-gunner of the

guerrilla army has killed numerous soldiers of the Imperial Army, so you cannot atone for this crime even if we kill three generations of your family. However, if you go to the communist army and persuade your husband to submit to us, and if you carry out the task we assign you, we'll give you a liberal reward and provide you with a life of comfort."

Ji Sun Ok had no choice but to obey the enemy because they had threatened to kill three generations of her family. Having heard her confession, I felt my heart ache with pity for her.

I could not repress my indignation at the vicious cowardice of the Japanese imperialists who did not hesitate to use even a woman's pure love and affection against us. The imperialists resorted to all kinds of methods to stifle the revolution. It was the habit of the Japanese imperialists to abuse the love between a man and his parents, a husband and wife, a man and his children, brothers and sisters, or even the love between a teacher and student, in order to disrupt and undermine the revolutionary ranks from within. Not satisfied with their scheme to crush the soul of our nation, they attempted to stifle even the beautiful nature of our people. In other words, they tried to turn Koreans into brutes.

Our armed struggle was not only a struggle to regain our territory and sovereignty, robbed from us by foreign forces; it was also a showdown against beasts to safeguard man and defend everything human.

The real nature of imperialists is to turn people into brutes and cripples and to deform them. Giving espionage training to a wife, forcing her to interfere with what her husband is doing and to poison her husband's Commander and his comrades-in-arms–this was nothing less than making a brute of her.

The world is talking a lot about environmental pollution these days. It is true that environmental pollution is a great threat to mankind. However, a greater danger than this is the moral collapse and human pollution being perpetrated by the imperialists. In the gutters and refuse heaps of this world, beasts, monsters and defectives in human form are produced every day by the imperialist reactionaries and their henchmen. Human pollution is the greatest

brake on the progress of history today. Placating Ji Sun Ok, who was lying prostrate and sobbing, I said:

"Don't worry. You have realized your crime, although belatedly, so we don't think ill of you in the least. You've been forced to commit the crime to avoid death, so it cannot be helped. Please get up."

Everyone in the secret camp was aghast when they heard that Ji Sun Ok had come there with an espionage mission. I intended to keep Ji Sun Ok's case a secret, but Comrades O Jung Hup and O Paek Ryong made it public for the sake of the safety of the unit and to get the soldiers to maintain a sharper vigilance.

Kang Hung Sok, who came to Headquarters at a run, almost lost his mind when he heard the others talking in whispers about his wife. He had a pistol in his hand and was going to finish her off himself. He looked as if he really were about to do something terrible, so I got him to cool down and sent him off to the upper reaches of the Hongqi River, where his regiment was stationed. I felt sorry to have to separate once more this couple, who were supposed to meet again after such a long, long time apart.

Even Chen Han-zhang, who held the position of a corps commander, had wanted to behave with disrespect towards his father, who had come to talk him into submission. So it was understandable how Kang Hung Sok must have felt.

One year even An Kil, a magnanimous and extremely sympathetic man, was going to personally dispose of a member of his family who had come to urge him to turn traitor. He gave up the idea after he had been persuaded not to do it.

Whenever they reacted violently, I reasoned with my men: "You should not wield your weapons recklessly. Just think: If soldiers fighting in the interests of the people shoot to death their own blood relations for the sake of upholding revolutionary principles, who will support them? The enemy wants our revolutionary army to think exactly as you're thinking right now. It wants father and son, brothers and sisters to become enemies and to carry on a fratricidal war. You must understand this and not act recklessly."

However, this kind of reprimand did not have much effect on Kang Hung Sok.

For this reason, the majority of the men in the secret camp did not trust Ji Sun Ok, but guarded against her for some time. They even suggested that she be punished severely.

However, I trusted Ji Sun Ok. She had been compelled to accept the espionage mission to save her kinfolk, and she had misunderstood the purpose of the revolutionary army, deceived as she was by the enemy propaganda. One can fall into such a trap if one lacks class awareness. Ji Sun Ok had not received systematic education through any revolutionary organization. However, once she understood the truth about me and our army, she frankly confessed her crime without delay, resolved to face death if need be. Had she not abandoned her evil intention, she would have poisoned our food rather than confessing. She had ample chance to do so. However, she had confessed, even though belatedly. Such a woman will inevitably come to our side; she cannot go over to the side of the enemy.

Once I heard from Comrade Kim Chaek about Ri Kye Dong's murder. Ri Kye Dong was a veteran Party member who served his term in prison with Kim Chaek and organized the Zhuhe guerrilla unit. A graduate of the Yunnan Military Training School, he was said to be an efficient commander in battle. A spy named Zhou Guang-ya killed this excellent military and political officer. Following his infiltration into the guerrilla unit, Zhou Guang-ya had wormed his way into the post of chief secretary in a unit. Taking advantage of the slackened discipline in the unit, he murdered Ri Kye Dong.

With this example in mind, our men naturally guarded against Ji Sun Ok.

Nevertheless I forgave Ji Sun Ok. Why? Because I had read her conscience, which had made her confess her crime out of her own mouth. A human being is the most developed being in the world because he has reason, conscience, moral sense and sense of duty. Without a conscience we are worthless. When we disgrace our conscience, we forfeit our value as a social being.

Although Ji Sun Ok had defiled her conscience, she regained it through struggle with herself. She disclosed her mistake because of her good

intentions towards us. It is easy to slip into a quagmire, but not easy to get out. However, Ji Sun Ok managed to escape, thanks to our help and through a hard struggle with herself. This showed that she had the strength to turn over a new leaf. Why should we then push back into the quagmire a woman who had candidly reflected on her wrongs and resolved to make a fresh start?

Revolution is a struggle to defend human conscience and preserve it. I wanted to make Ji Sun Ok remain faithful to her conscience.

Even if there was just one revolutionary in a family, the Japanese imperialists schemed to isolate and exclude him from his kinsmen. The enemy's consistent scheme was to crush our patriotic forces at random, disintegrating and destroying them one by one. Sometimes they misused the ties of kinship among our nation for their "surrender" schemes. The enemy's ultimate aim was to sever the communists from the masses. The most pernicious method in their scheme was to make blood relations mistrust each other, hate and kill each other.

Nothing would be stupider than for us to continue to be fooled by such an evil design by the enemy once we are aware of it. Therefore, we saw to it that even though she had come on an espionage mission, she was pardoned and encouraged to turn over a new leaf, because she had not committed the unforgivable crime of betraying her country and her fellow countrymen.

Once a spy dispatched by the Government-General came to see us in the guise of a Christian. The spy brought several bags of flour. He said that the flour was a gift he had brought from Korea for the revolutionary army who were experiencing such hardships far away from home, and asked us to make dumplings with it.

I told the cooks to prepare dumplings with the whole lot of the flour. Before long a cook came to me with a dish full of dumplings. The spy declined my offer to have some. When I asked him to help himself to the dumplings again, his face turned pale. Small wonder, since he had mixed poison with the flour.

I said to him: "Why on earth are you trying to kill us when we're having such a hard time living and fighting in the open air to regain our

lost country? Being a Korean, you should behave like a Korean. You should not act so contemptibly. You can still mend your ways even now and make a fresh start." I reasoned with him in this way. We treated him well in a hut before sending him back. I heard later that this story was reported in a magazine.

Despite O Paek Ryong's objection, I saw to it that Ji Sun Ok remained in the secret camp and was educated by us. Some time later we sent her to the sewing unit. The sewing unit had been assigned the task of making 600 uniforms for the coming large-unit circling operations, but it was having difficulties because of the shortage of hands.

Kang Wi Ryong, who was working with the sewing unit, did not welcome Ji Sun Ok. Therefore, I gave Choe Hui Suk and some other women Party members the task of treating Ji kindly and of educating her carefully. They took sincere care of her and educated her well.

Leaving for Hualazi after we had celebrated the Harvest Moon Day, I summoned Kang Hung Sok, who was with his unit on the upper reaches of the Hongqi River.

This is how the dramatic reunion of the couple finally took place in the thick forest of Hualazi.

Staying there for some time, we conducted military and political studies. Ji Sun Ok studied hard, using the teaching materials we had prepared. She was a fairly learned woman who had received primary school education. Later during the march she managed to keep pace with the unit and cooked meals for the men. She was unaccustomed to the guerrilla life and found it hard, but the smile never disappeared from her face.

However, just as everything was going well for her, she was hit by a tragedy: Kang Hung Sok fell in the Battle of Liukesong.

For some time we did not tell Ji Sun Ok about this because we thought she would not be able to bear the great shock.

Whenever the unit was on a march, Ji Sun Ok would gaze at the machine-gun on Kim Un Sin's shoulder. It was the machine-gun Kang Hung Sok had used while still alive. My men told Ji Sun Ok that the machine-gun had been

handed over to Kim Un Sin because Kang was out to work in a local area, but this was merely a way to sidetrack her.

After the Battle of Liukesong we organized an art performance in a forest on the Songhua River. At the performance I noticed how melancholy Ji Sun Ok was.

Now that her husband was gone, we could not keep her in the unit any longer, so later we sent her back home. Otherwise, there was a danger of her kinfolk being killed by the Japanese.

As she left the secret camp, we gave her a travel allowance and sent a guide to accompany her. I still vividly remember her looking back at me again and again until she disappeared into the forest.

After the armistice I heard that Ji Sun Ok had come to see me, but I could not meet her then because I was so pressed for time. She might have been disappointed by this. After that I had no time to spare with one thing or another. Many people had to go away without meeting me after covering a long distance to come to Pyongyang.

Judging from the fact that Ji Sun Ok proudly came back to see me, it seems that she must have been living without committing any crimes against the country after parting from us. If I had met her at that time, I might have heard in detail how she had lived after leaving the mountains. Fortunately, comrades sent me a book entitled *Information of Modern History*. I could roughly piece together the outline of her life through the contents of the book. I was able to guess how Ji Sun Ok had behaved back home in front of the enemy who had sent her to the secret camp and how she had described the life of the revolutionary army.

The contents of the report submitted by Kiuchi, consul in Hunchun, to his superiors are as follows: All the cadres of the Korean People's Revolutionary Army have sound ideology and constantly strive for victory in the revolution. It is therefore natural that the fighting men are charmed by this, completely trusting them and obeying their orders without a murmur. This is why they find it so easy to carry out all their operations. The Second Directional Army is fired by a fighting spirit and has a full capacity for united action. This is

because Kim Il Sung, Commander of the army, has intense national communist ideology and is strong and healthy. Moreover, he is skilful in controlling his men.

I believe that the real state of things in our unit is comparatively fairly outlined in this report, which means that Ji Sun Ok correctly described the life of our revolutionary army and the psychological state of our men. Her description was free of bias.

If one wants to know how the enemy treated Ji Sun Ok after she returned home, it is sufficient to read the following from the report submitted by consul Kiuchi:

I. My view of her and disposal

1. My view

(1) Her testimony is convincing because it is perfectly logical in view of the prevailing situation. Nevertheless, she was not punished and lived with the communist bandits for over one year; moreover, she was set free despite the fact that the poison she concealed when leaving for the mountains was discovered. From this one may suspect that her return is a sham, fabricated in accordance with the intention of the guerrilla army. Therefore, serious attention needs to be paid to her speech and behaviour.

…

2. Disposal

(1) We have handed Ji Sun Ok over to section leader Katada in Antu.

Watching her in secret, we are trying to appease her under the premise that her coming back home is a sham. At the same time as examining her, we have assigned her to a special task. (Secret information of Hunchun consul No. 186, July 26, Showa 15 (1940), report from Hunchun consul Kiuchi Tadao)

It is said that the Japanese imperialists were very nervous about Ji Sun Ok's safe return. No wonder, for how were they to understand this when they themselves regarded human beings as nothing more than talking animals?

Some claimed that Ji Sun Ok should have been punished. Nevertheless, we pardoned her without prosecuting her for her crime. What would have

happened if we had punished her? Her husband's home and all her relatives would have been labelled a reactionary family.

Our revolution is aimed not at ostracizing people but at loving and protecting them, as well as at upholding human nature and allowing it maximum expression. It is easy to ostracize a person, but very difficult to save him. We must, however difficult it might be, give those who have committed mistakes a chance to redeem themselves. We must trust them and help them to lead a true human life. The value and greatness of the revolution lie in the fact that it treats people as human beings and helps them to renew their lives.

The imperialists forsake people like pieces of rubble, but we must value them as the most precious beings and save them. And once we have gone so far as to trust a person, we must never neglect him. As I frequently say, the best point in Comrade Kim Jong Il's disposition is that he highly appreciates people and dearly loves them, and that once he trusts someone, he never abandons him.

Once Comrade Kim Jong Il told his subordinates: "Napoleon said, 'Because you trust me, I also believe in you.' On the contrary, I tell you, I trust you. You believe in me, too.' " This is Comrade Kim Jong Il's philosophy.

Whenever I see Comrade Kim Jong Il who believes in the people, shows affection for them and works devotedly for them, I feel relieved about the future of our country and our people.

Whereas the imperialists habitually disgraced man and destroyed his destiny, our leader Comrade Kim Il Sung showed in practice that the communists value people most dearly and protect their political integrity, and that human relations must be integrated with the noble morality and faith that rest on the principles of love and trust and on the principle of saving people. These are the sacred moral principles of the Korean revolution.

2. Chinese Landlord Liu Tong-shi

After liberation one day, the great leader Comrade Kim Il Sung met Chinese comrade Peng Zhen and recollected with deep emotion the days when the people and communists of Korea and China carried out their armed struggle together against the Japanese.

Peng Zhen praised the close class solidarity and noble proletarian internationalism displayed by the Korean people and communists in the joint struggle for national liberation. He then digressed and told the great leader that during the operations to liberate Northeast China he had noticed that many Chinese landlords produced certificates with the signature and seal, *Kim Il Sung, Commander of the Korean People's Revolutionary Army*, which stressed that they had helped the Anti-Japanese Allied Army. In those days Peng Zhen was political commissar of the Northeast Democratic Allied Army.

Later, replying to the questions about the certificates, raised by those who were studying the history of the anti-Japanese revolutionary struggle, the great leader recalled the following story:

The certificates remind me of Liu Tong-shi. If I tell you his story, you will have a better understanding of what was meant by the "aid-the-army" certificates.

Liu Tong-shi was a wealthy Chinese whom we met in Helong County after we moved to the area northeast of Mt. Paektu. He ended up having as close a relationship with us as was the case with Kim Jong Bu, the patriotic Korean landlord whom we had met in Changbai County.

His real name is Liu Yi-xian. He spoke Korean as fluently as his own mother tongue. When Chinese and Koreans had anything to discuss, he volunteered to act as interpreter. So people called him Liu Tong-shi. Tong-shi means "interpreter".

After the Battle of Wukoujiang in the area northeast of Mt Paektu, we carried out mobile operations in Helong, in the Samjang area of the

homeland, and then in Antu County. Later, staying in the Wukoujiang Secret Camp for a period, we conducted intensive political and military activities.

In those days the main force was fighting elsewhere, and only the machine-gun platoon and the Guard Company were with Headquarters. We were suffering an acute shortage of provisions. All the Koreans living in the neighbourhood of the secret camp were poor peasants, so they found it difficult to help us, even though they wanted to.

When we moved into Helong County, our operatives said that the enemy controlling the area had spread a rumour that the revolutionary army would come there and take away all the food, so they had all the food collected and fixed the daily amount of food consumption per capita, allotting only two days' rations at one time to those village representatives who came with ox-carts. The enemy even ordered every household in the county to obtain two bottles of kerosene in order to pour it over even these provisions if the revolutionary army demanded them.

I racked my brains over a solution to this problem. One day we went to a village and talked with the inhabitants there. I happened to meet a man who said he had lived in the Xiaowangqing guerrilla zone and came to Helong County when the guerrilla zone had been disbanded. In the course of talking to him, I heard in detail about the wealthy Chinese, Liu Tong-shi.

It seemed that if we succeeded in winning over Liu Tong-shi, it would help us both in keeping the anti-Japanese patriotic forces under our control and in obtaining the supplies we needed.

However, my men Ju Jae Il and Kang Wi Ryong, who had lived in Helong before they joined the guerrilla army, said that we should not pin any hopes on Liu. They even suggested that we should punish him because he was a detestable anti-communist who had occupied the post of head of a Self-Defence Corps at one time. They knew Liu Tong-shi relatively well.

According to them, Liu Tong-shi's family lived at the foot of Mt. Niuxin, about twelve kilometres away from the Helong county town. I think that his village was called Longtancun. His house was an imposing one, surrounded by a long earthen wall with gun emplacements at the four corners.

His elder brother was already over seventy and was treated as the elder of the family without doing anything. Liu Tong-shi himself, the second brother, was the mainstay of the family, taking charge of public affairs and courting the government authorities. Liu Yi-qing, the third brother, managed the family property with his clerks.

According to Ri Pong Rok and Pak Jong Suk, veterans of the anti-Japanese revolutionary struggle, Liu Tong-shi's family had 100 *shang* of land alone. One *shang* amounts to 3,000 *phyong*, so 100 *shang* is equal to 300,000 *phyong*. In other words, the equivalent of about 100 hectares. They also owned a soybean oil factory, a dried-starch noodle factory, a distillery and many shops. In Helong they had a department store, a restaurant and a shop that had a monopoly on salt, all of which they ran through agents.

Liu Tong-shi's family was famous for its large property, but its members were also notorious for their opposition to communists. Guerrillas from Helong called this family the most wicked of all vicious elements. Liu Tong-shi's son was serving as a policeman for Manchukuo in Helong. The guerrillas considered that this fact alone was enough to point to the true nature of this family. Exercising his authority as a policeman, Liu Tong-shi's son used armed force to prevent coolies and tenants from moving about freely. And Liu himself informed his son's police station against those whom he suspected of having connections with the Communist Party, thus setting them up for an interrogation, or destroyed their way to earn a living by depriving them of tenant rights.

Nevertheless, I did not agree to the proposal of some people, that we should punish Liu Tong-shi's family immediately and dispossess them. This was partly because I had learned a lesson in my relations with Kim Jong Bu, and partly because some people saw Liu Tong-shi in a different light. We could not dispose of him rashly and carelessly without studying him in greater detail.

I thought we should give Liu Tong-shi the benefit of the doubt because he spoke Korean well and also because he mixed unreservedly with the ordinary people.

Furthermore, some people said that when the question of Korean tenants was raised at the government office, he had volunteered to be the interpreter and sided with the tenants. This was also a good factor; there was nothing bad in this.

Others said that he pitied the Korean tenants, who were deprived of their own country and were leading a hard life in a foreign land, and that he took special care of them.

Moreover, it was said that Liu Tong-shi's concubine in Niufudong was a Korean. This was also an interesting bit of news.

He sympathized with Korean peasants living in a strange land, he kept a Korean woman as a concubine, and he was fond of the Korean language and Korean customs. Then why was he regarded as a vicious landlord by some people? Why had this man, known to be kind-hearted, tormented Ju Jae Il's and Kang Wi Ryong's families by having them dragged off to the police station?

To solve this mystery, I sent my comrades to Longtancun. They returned with a lot of information about Liu Tong-shi. Their inquiry revealed that Liu Tong-shi had become the enemy of those engaged in the communist movement because of the May 30 Uprising.

As you well know, the Left adventurists ran amok in the May 30 Uprising. They tarred with the same brush all those who owned land, regardless of whether the owners were pro-Japanese or anti-Japanese. Egged on by the Leftists, the rioters committed all sorts of violent acts, such as breaking through the front gates of landlords' houses and setting fire to the granaries. Such ultra-Leftist behaviour disgraced the image of the entire Communist Party.

Since then Liu Tong-shi had regarded the Communist Party as his sworn enemy and mercilessly persecuted those families that supposedly had communist fighters among their members. At the same time he was on very intimate terms with the warlords who shielded the landlords.

Liu Tong-shi became still more opposed to the Communist Party when he heard that, with the formation of the guerrilla bases in the Jiandao area

following the September 18 incident, the party had divided the residential areas into “Red territories” and “White territories” and was hostile to everyone who lived in the “White territories”. He hated both the Japanese, who acted as the masters in Manchuria, and the communists.

Liu Tong-shi would often say, “The Communist Party is my sworn enemy.”

I believed that he was against communists because of a temporary misunderstanding, and that if we exerted a positive influence on him we would be able to persuade him to stop opposing communists, become our ally and love his country. Liu Tong-shi was also displeased with the Japanese because after their occupation of Manchuria they disarmed and disbanded his private army. I paid particular attention to his anti-Japanese sentiments.

Instead of punishing Liu Tong-shi or confiscating his property, we resolved to urge him to cast aside his anti-communism and to develop his anti-Japanese and patriotic spirit. In this way we hoped to turn him into a supporter and patron of our revolution. For this reason we sent an operative group, with O Il Nam from the 7th Regiment as its head, to pay him a visit.

On meeting Liu, O Il Nam told him that General Kim Il Sung had sent the group to hold talks with him, and asked him whether he was willing to comply with the request.

Hearing this, Liu Tong-shi smiled bitterly and said in fluent Korean:

“If you want to arrest me, arrest me without going into details. Why do you veil your intentions with the word ‘talks’? You’re probably saying that the Commander of the communist army requests an interview with me, a landlord, simply because you can’t come right out and say you’re going to arrest me. When I heard the rumour that you were going around in Helong County, I, Liu Yi-xian, already knew that I would not be able to escape the fate of a fish on the chopping board. Now that I’m all ready and prepared for death, don’t beat about the bush with a word like ‘talks’, but do as you please–kill me, take me away, or confiscate my property.” He was spiteful because he thought O Il Nam’s operative group had come to kidnap him. They told me the old man spoke with great disdain.

Liu Tong-shi treated O Il Nam and his party so coldly that the latter thought at first that their operation was a failure. The more obstinate Liu Tong-shi became, the more firmly O Il Nam resolved to try every possible means to get the old man to come to Headquarters. He explained that the Korean People's Revolutionary Army was a group of genuine communists entirely different from those who during the May 30 Uprising knocked down at random all rich people, regardless of whether they were pro-Japanese or anti-Japanese, or whether they were patriots or traitors. He also explained that the noble mission of this army was to achieve the liberation of both Korean and Chinese people and to protect their lives and property. Then he added that if Liu Tong-shi really declined the request of our Headquarters, he would have his party quietly withdraw.

Hearing this, Liu Tong-shi, his mouth tightly shut, lost himself in thought for a good while. Then with a change in attitude he told O Il Nam that he had better stay there for a little longer and tell him more about the current situation. He asked O Il Nam why he had bothered to come so far if all he was going to do was to leave suddenly. He then said that if Commander Kim had really invited him for talks, he would take the Commander's request into consideration.

Perhaps he had been afraid of evil consequences of his refusal. Moreover, O Il Nam had behaved like a gentleman and outlined the situation with calm good humour, so probably Liu Tong-shi became curious and his anger left him.

"I've heard that Commander Kim's unit fights well. However, Commander Kim is also said to be a communist, so he must despise rich people. To tell the truth, I have heard something about your army; judging from your speech and behaviour, you are somewhat different from other armies. ... Anyway, I'll go, since General Kim has asked me."

Then he said: "If you want to take me, bind me with a rope as if escorting a criminal. If the Japanese become aware of the fact that I have obediently followed you of my own accord in compliance with Commander Kim's request, they will dispatch their 'punitive' force and behead me. And my family will never be safe again. So take me as if you were kidnapping me."

Although O Il Nam thought Liu Tong-shi's idea a good one, he hesitated because my order was to bring Liu Tong-shi in a decent way, not as a captive. O Il Nam thought that if he were to take Liu Tong-shi by binding him with a rope without approval from Headquarters, the same thing would happen as had happened when Kim Ju Hyon's group acted violently towards Kim Jong Bu in Changbai County. It was fortunate that O Il Nam made this judgement.

Hearing O Il Nam's report, I also thought that the scheme proposed by Liu Tong-shi was an ingenious one. I was about to support it, but some of the commanding officers cautioned that if we followed this idea, Liu's son, the policeman, might create a commotion and even the garrison would make a great fuss. If gunshots were heard in Longtancun, the enemy in Helong county town would immediately send reinforcements.

If we were to put Liu Tong-shi's idea into effect, we had to operate over a wide area and carry out large-scale military activities. Having decided to attack simultaneously the enemy in the three villages centring on Longtancun, where Liu Tong-shi's house was located, we took with us the 7th and 8th Regiments as well as the Guard Company.

I commanded the operations, having established Headquarters at the village next to Longtancun, the village in which the house of Liu Tong-shi's in-laws was situated.

Before launching the operation we changed our original plan and decided to make Liu Tong-shi, who had to manage all the affairs of his family, stay at home for the time being. Instead we would take Liu Yi-qing, his younger brother, because we thought that by so doing we would achieve the same result as by taking Liu Tong-shi without provoking his son and the army and police too much. Liu Yi-qing had no children. From olden times the Chinese had a peculiar custom of loving, among all brothers, most dearly the one who had no children. Therefore, if Liu's family established contacts with us under the pretext of negotiating the safe return of Liu Yi-qing, the enemy and their neighbours would not suspect too much.

Our operations were successfully conducted as planned, and our units withdrew from the three villages simultaneously. When the unit of the

revolutionary army was leaving his village, Liu Tong-shi called out his elder brother's third son and made him accompany Liu Yi-qing, his uncle, to take care of the latter. I suppose he sent his elder brother's son to the mountains to reduce Liu Yi-qing's loneliness.

My men told me they had had a great deal of trouble on their way back to the secret camp because of Liu Yi-qing. He could not walk too well because he was overweight. On top of that, he was an opium addict and apparently the effects of the opium he had been smoking were wearing off. So we carried him on a stretcher. The revolutionary army, walking many miles, carrying an overweight opium fiend on a stretcher! Can you imagine it? Such an instance must be pretty rare. Indeed, in those days we went through all sorts of strange experiences.

I told O Paek Ryong, commander of the Guard Company, to take goodcare of Liu Tong-shi's younger brother and nephew. The men of the Guard Company pitched a tent for the guests and looked after them well. Although we had difficulties with provisions in those days, we managed to give them good meals of rice and meat soup.

However, Liu Yi-qing did not eat very much. We thought it was because the meals did not appeal to him since he was a wealthy man, used to eating all sorts of delicacies at every meal. However, this turned out not to be the reason. He had no appetite because of his craving for opium. Every day Liu Yi-qing pestered the men of the Guard Company for opium, saying he could go without meals but not without opium. He said he would pay them as much as they wanted, if only they would give him some.

My men could not comply with his request. At that time we had only a small amount of opium for emergency use at the medical centre as a substitute for anaesthetic. Finally losing his reason because of his craving Liu Yi-qing started hurling all sorts of abuse and insults at the men of the Guard Company.

It was an absurd situation–the son of a landlord screaming for opium from the revolutionary army at their secret camp!

I told my men to bring the guests to the tent of Headquarters. Liu Yi-qing was in a terrible state. When an opium addict stops smoking opium, his

vision becomes blurred and he cannot keep proper balance.

I told the men at the medical centre to supply a small amount of opium to Liu Yi-qing every day, even if they had to use up all the emergency supply of opium. As soon as he lit up his pipe, Liu Yi-qing became animated and walked on air with a broad smile.

It seemed he had never in his life done any physical work. He did not even know how to put away his bedding, so his nephew did it for him. Indeed, he had idled his time away living in clover, never lifting a finger for anything.

One day, as I was winding up my talk with him, I told that a man could feel the meaning of life and have a good appetite only if he worked as hard as his physical strength allowed him. I went on to say that in olden times a certain princess had made others do everything for her, so she was finally unable even to peel an apple. I pointed out that if one depended only on others, one would eventually become this kind of fool. Liu Yi-qing said that he differed little from that princess. He added, nevertheless, that he was good at one thing: making dumplings. I was glad to hear that. It was fortunate that the man I had judged to be nearly an invalid at least had the skill of making dumplings, even though it was not an extraordinary skill.

I told one of the cooks at Headquarters to bring the stuff for making dumplings. Liu Yi-qing made the dough thin and smooth, put in the stuffing and made the dumplings with astonishing skill. He not only shaped them nicely, but made them as fast as lightning.

Eating his dumplings with my men, I praised his extraordinary skill. From the following day on, whenever we were about to make dumplings, Liu Yi-qing rolled up his sleeves and helped the cooks. On such days he became talkative and even cracked jokes with me. One day, when he returned after making dumplings, he said that he felt joy in living now that he was working, as I had suggested. He said this sincerely.

However, we did not make dumplings every day. When there was no job for him to do, Liu Yi-qing was bored to death and smoked more opium than on other days. I told him a lot of instructive stories, starting with the story

about the Opium War and telling him about Confucius and Mencius. I even talked about certain patriotic men of property who had made their names in Chinese history. The names of Zhang Wei-hua and Chen Han-zhang, revolutionaries from wealthy families, naturally became the topic of our conversation.

Liu Yi-qing listened to me with great interest. One day he asked for a writing brush and some paper. He wrote a letter to Liu Yi-xian, saying that he wanted to help Commander Kim with money and property, although he was not quite ready to commit suicide for the sake of the revolution, as Zhang Wei-hua had done. He even showed me the letter.

Reading it, I could see it was not in vain that we had treated him humanely. Liu Yi-qing started the letter by writing about how he and his nephew were getting along. He specially emphasized that he shared the same tent with me, that he was making dumplings with me and that the men of the revolutionary army were kindly looking after him like their own brother. Then he wrote that since he had been treated hospitably and kindly, he had to return the favour. He went on to say that if his elder brother sent such things as rice, cloth, shoes and the like, they would be a great help in the operations of the revolutionary army, and in that case he and his nephew would be able to return home soon. Our education and enlightenment of him had proved fruitful.

Liu Tong-shi, who was anxious about the safety of his younger brother and nephew after sending them off to the mountains, was extremely pleased to receive this letter. He sent us notice of the date by which he would prepare the goods we needed, and asked me to send some people to carry these things. We dispatched Ri Pong Rok with men numbering the strength of about one platoon to carry the goods. They brought back cotton cloth sufficient to make hundreds of uniforms, workmen's shoes, rice, flour, pancakes, pork and soybean oil. Liu Tong-shi sent such goods to our secret camp on three occasions.

As dealings with our comrades became more frequent, he requested a formal interview with me and asked to be brought to our secret camp. He wanted to meet me, the Commander of the revolutionary army, to exchange

greetings with me now that he was helping this army. I saw to it that he was brought to our secret camp.

When Liu Tong-shi was about to leave for his meeting with me, his policeman son came to oppose the trip. He said: “It seems that you, father, have decided to go to the secret camp of the revolutionary army after receiving Uncle’s letter. You’d better give this matter some thought. Uncle wrote that he and cousin were living with General Kim Il Sung in the same tent and making dumplings with him, I can’t believe that. How can the Commander of the revolutionary army share bed and board with civilians? Moreover, Uncle is a landlord’s son. The Communist Party says all landlords must be overthrown. It’s obviously a whopping lie that the Commander of the revolutionary army shares bed and board with a member of the hostile class and that they make dumplings like housewives together. One of Commander Kim’s men must have forced him to write this.”

Liu Tong-shi answered: “Don’t talk nonsense. I’ve met Commander Kim’s men several times. All of them are polite and warm-hearted young men, so I think Commander Kim has good men under him. Their behaviour towards me alone is enough to show me Commander Kim’s personality and the discipline of the unit. Now that I’m in touch with the revolutionary army, I would like to go to the mountains to meet Commander Kim and personally confirm the truth of your uncle’s letter.”

When Liu Tong-shi came to see me, he brought with him a uniform and a coat made of plain but good-quality woollen cloth, a pair of boots and a cap. These were all gifts for me. After exchanging a few words with him, I found him to be no ordinary man and not to be compared with his younger brother, either in personality or knowledge. He was gentlemanly, and his speech and conduct were noble and dignified.

Liu Tong-shi spoke to me in Korean, saying that we must have gone through many hardships in the mountains. Then he expressed his gratitude to me for the good care we had taken of his younger brother and nephew. On my part, I thanked him for the large amount of goods he had sent to help our army, and for visiting us despite his advanced age.

We pitched a separate tent for Liu Tong-shi and had him meet his younger brother and nephew there.

Liu Yi-qing said to his elder brother: “What do they mean by saying the soldiers of the communist army are red devils? That’s nonsense. No one in the world is as good-natured as these people. Commander Kim’s army is a gentlemanly army.” He thus praised the revolutionary army to the skies, even adding that he had been enlightened, thanks to Commander Kim.

Liu Yi-qing spoke so highly of us that after meeting his younger brother, Liu Tong-shi called on me again and repeatedly thanked me.

On meeting Liu Tong-shi I was most surprised by the fact that he had excellent knowledge of not only the Korean language and customs, but also of its history and culture. He and I understood each other very easily.

I was most impressed when he said he could not help but sympathize with Koreans when he saw them leading a hard life in a foreign land, deprived of their country. Just as I liked Chinese and was attached to them, so did Liu Tong-shi love Koreans.

He asked me suddenly: “Commander Kim, people call your army ‘communist bandits’. Is it true that you are a communist?”

“Calling our army ‘communist bandits’ is a fabrication of the Japanese, but it’s true I’m a communist.”

“Then, Commander Kim, what do you think of me, a man who has been against all communists up to now?”

Probably one of the reasons he had come to our secret camp was to get a reply to this question, so I had to give him a prudent answer.

From the first days of the anti-Japanese armed struggle, I had held a lot of negotiations with people who were against communism. Commander Yu was opposed to communism, as was Wu Yi-cheng at first. Ryang Se Bong, a Korean, was also hostile to communists although he was a patriot. It was only in his last years that he allied with communists. In each of my negotiations with Commander Yu, Commander Wu, and Commander Ryang, I was in a position to speak in defence of communism and to convince them of the need to ally with communists for the sake of a united front. The choice between

alliance with communists and opposition to them was up to them. Therefore, even though I always led the negotiations and took the initiative, I had to wait for their answer anxiously.

The situation was different, however, in my talk with Liu Tong-shi. I was in a position to denounce his anti-communist acts, but he had to listen to my judgement. It was very gratifying that he wanted to find out our attitude to his anti-communist acts of his own accord. Anyhow, he was candid and broad-minded.

According to my experience, there were two categories of anti-communism. One was deliberate and active anti-communism, pursued by those who wanted to destroy communism because they thought they would meet their end if communists gained the upper hand. The other was blind anti-communism, pursued by those who either loathed communism at the sight of the wrongdoings perpetrated by pseudo-communists, or by those who automatically rejected and gave communism a wide berth, deceived by the pernicious propaganda of the imperialists. It could be said that Liu Tong-shi belonged to the second category.

If we were to lead him from opposing communists into allying with them, we had to be candid with him about our attitude. I had to refrain from currying favour with him just to receive aid goods from him; at the same time I could not denounce him to his face as a wicked man simply because he was a landlord and anti-communist. It was important to tell him clearly the good and bad points in his deeds, thus inducing him to ally with us and love his country, instead of opposing us.

“I feel extremely sorry that you are against communists. However, we do not intend to punish you in the least, since you oppose communism because you do not understand it. Moreover, you love China and the Chinese people despite your opposition to communists. You do not want to see your country ruined, and you want to be a Chinese in your own country, even though you are a landlord and against communists. I attach great importance to this. A man who loves his country can easily ally with communists.”

As I said this, Liu Tong-shi took my hand, full of emotion.

"Thank you, Commander Kim. Although there are many people and many mouths in Helong, you are the only person who has recognized that I am a patriot. That's enough to help me sleep in peace."

He confessed that he had been against communists because of narrow-mindedness, and asked what he should do to cooperate with us.

I said: "It is not hard to understand what alliance with communists means. Opposing Manchukuo, resisting Japan and helping our revolutionary army all mean alliance with the communists. You already started cooperating with us the day you sent your younger brother and nephew to us. Those who truly love their country and nation will eventually understand communism and reconcile with the communists, because the latter also love their country and nation. Alliance with communists and opposition to Japan is the most important patriotic deed for both Korean and Chinese landlords."

Liu Tong-shi said that he was fortunate to discover his own worth, although belatedly, thanks to Commander Kim.

The following day, however, he was strangely reticent. When I asked him if there was anything wrong, he simply replied no.

I summoned O Paek Ryong and asked him whether anything undesirable had happened while the Guard Company had been looking after Liu Tong-shi.

O Paek Ryong said there was nothing particularly wrong. He added, however, that because Liu Tong-shi had asked to be allowed to inspect the secret camp, O had taken him around, showing him the training of the soldiers and inviting him to a recreation party. When Liu Tong-shi was inspecting the cooking area, he was rather displeased at the sight of a pot in which gruel, a half-and-half mixture of sorghum and edible grass, was boiling.

Liu Tong-shi asked: "Why are you preparing this sort of meal instead of rice, now that I have sent you dozens of sacks of rice? Of course, it's understandable if you cook gruel in order to spare your rice, but it's unreasonable to serve even the Commander with gruel because of the shortage of provisions." Probably he was shocked by the fact that the Commander ate the same meals as his men. He was still more deeply moved, while inspecting the medical centre, to learn that the centre had given his younger

brother all the opium it had been saving to treat patients in an emergency.

Having heard all this from O Paek Ryong, I thought I'd better send Liu Tong-shi and his party back home.

Liu Tong-shi, however, said that he would return home alone, and requested me to allow his younger brother and nephew to stay a little longer in our secret camp for the time being. He said he wanted to send more goods to our unit, but there had to be an excuse for him to do this. He said that if his younger brother and nephew remained in our secret camp, this would be a good pretext in front of the Japanese, even if they found out about the delivery of the goods.

It was extremely gratifying that Liu Tong-shi volunteered to give us more help. It seems to be human nature for a person to try to prove himself worthy if complete confidence is placed in him.

Prior to Liu Tong-shi's departure I gave him a modest farewell party. At the party he apologized to me for having been hostile to communists and for having mistaken our revolutionary army for "bandits". He said that he would be sparing with neither money nor goods to help the revolutionary army.

Before parting from us, he asked me to write a certificate for him, so that when the 8th Route Army liberated Northeast China, he could show them that he had given material assistance to the Korean People's Revolutionary Army. I wrote on a piece of silk in Chinese: "Liu Tong-shi is a fine patriot. He has given moral and material assistance to the Anti-Japanese Allied Army." Under that I wrote "Commander Kim Il Sung" and then affixed my seal to it. The certificate Peng Zhen saw was probably this kind of document.

In those days many Chinese landlords in Manchuria pretended to cooperate with the Japanese, but secretly helped anti-Japanese fighters. They believed that the day would come when the Japanese imperialists were destroyed and the puppet state of Manchukuo was returned to China.

Whenever they helped the People's Revolutionary Army, Chinese landlords asked us to write a certificate with the words, *Zhu Shi Kang*. I wrote such documents for landlords in Changbai County and for others in Emu and Dunhua Counties.

Zhu Shi Kang are Chinese words, *Zhu* meaning "pig", *Shi*, "eat" and *Kang*, "bran". Thus they mean that a pig eats bran. If we use the ideographs for "red", "eat" and "peace", they are also pronounced *Zhu Shi Kang*, but in this case these ideographs mean that Zhu De conquers Kang De. In those days the 8th Route Army was called Zhu-Mao Army, with the ideographs standing for the surnames of Zhu De and Mao Ze-dong. Kang De was the reign-title of Pu Yi, Emperor of Manchukuo, set up by Japanese. When the Chinese said, *Zhu Shi Kang*, it was a secret code, meaning that the 8th Route Army would liberate Northeast China.

After Liu Tong-shi had returned, many more goods than before arrived at the Wukoujiang Secret Camp. He sent all kinds of supplies by truck, which helped us greatly in our preparations for winter that year.

He also sent us a lump of opium as large as a wooden pillow in return for the opium our medical centre had given his brother.

With the Harvest Moon Day of that year near at hand, we sent Liu Tong-shi's younger brother and nephew back home. Bidding farewell to us, Liu Yi-qing shed a lot of tears. He said that once he was back home he would give up smoking opium and live like a decent human being.

Not long after we had sent them back, we also left the Wukoujiang Secret Camp. Since then, we never had any more contact with Liu Tong-shi or his brother. However, I always remember Liu Tong-shi and believe that he lived conscientiously.

Among Liu Tong-shi's relatives there is a man named Liu Zhen-guo, one of his nephews. This man sent a letter to the Party History Institute. According to this letter, Liu Tong-shi also recalled us frequently until his death. It seems that back home from our secret camp, he clearly expressed his intention to oppose Japanese imperialists and gave wide publicity to us.

It is said that Liu Tong-shi kept the certificate we had written at the Wukoujiang Secret Camp to the end of his life as a family treasure. I have been told that after his death, his younger brother's family kept the document. I was very touched to hear that.

The heart-to-heart talks I had with Liu Tong-shi at the secret camp made

us lifelong friends who never forgot each other. We remained on friendly terms with each other, although we were separated across a long distance.

What does this mean? It means that while those capitalists who seek only their own interests and pleasure, caring nothing for their country, nation or kinsmen, will never share our ideas, the conscientious capitalists who love their country, nation and fellow citizens can become our companions, irrespective of their nationality, party affiliations or political views. Differences in ideas or property status cannot be an absolute criterion for judging people. The broadest criterion for judging people is how much or how little they love their country, love their nation and love their fellow human beings. It is a rule that one who values human beings also loves one's nation, and one who loves one's nation also loves one's country. This is an indisputable truth.

Anyone who disregards this truth will make Right or Left mistakes in one's work with people. For some time, several articles dealing with the history of the anti-Japanese revolutionary struggle defined Liu Tong-shi as a vicious anti-communist landlord. We cannot regard this estimation to be correct. If one indiscriminately judges people only by their class origin and past records, or deals imprudently with them, one will commit a colossal blunder in one's work with them. One will take a patriot for a traitor and vice versa, or denounce a supporter of the revolution as a counterrevolutionary element.

One day, when he was received by the great leader, Son Won Thae, a Korean residing in the United States, asked: "President, there are many capitalists in south Korea. How are you going to deal with them when the country is reunified?"

The fatherly leader replied:

"I intend to join hands with all of them no matter who they are, except for the stubborn reactionaries who are betraying the nation with the backing of foreign forces. The Ten-Point Programme of the Great Unity of the Whole Nation for the Reunification of the Country incorporates our stand on this."

3. Confronted by Hundreds of Thousands of “Punitive” Troops

From the autumn of 1939 to the spring of 1941 the Japanese imperialists conducted unprecedentedly large-scale “punitive” operations in the three provinces in southeastern Manchuria against the Korean People’s Revolutionary Army. They called this procedure a “special clean-up campaign for maintaining public peace”.

After reading the accounts of Nozoe, the mastermind of the campaign, and those of his subordinate commanders of the “punitive” forces, about their defeat in this campaign, the great leader Comrade Kim Il Sung told his officials, “Considering the fact that the Japanese officers, who loved to talk big, spoke dejectedly like this, they must have had a tough time of it. Not to mention the hardships I and my men went through. The battles were decisive.”

He then recollected the confrontation with the enemy in detail.

The period from the late 1930s to the early 1940s was the most difficult in our armed struggle. Both the Arduous March and the large-scale “punitive” operations conducted by the Japanese imperialists in the three provinces in southeastern Manchuria in the name of a “special clean-up campaign for maintaining public peace” were a tremendous trial for us. Jilin, Tonghua and Jiandao were the three southeastern provinces. The struggle at every stage was both stressful and complicated, and I cannot forget the tribulations we experienced at that time.

It was by pure chance that we found out the enemy was planning to launch long-term, large-scale “punitive” operations from the autumn of 1939 on.

A company commander of the Chinese “Fengtian unit”, who had been captured by us at the Battle of Wukoujiang in June that year, revealed the secret to us. In that battle we captured many enemy officers and men. They wondered why the revolutionary army released all the prisoners of war and

even gave them travelling money. Before releasing them, we selected a number of intelligent men from among the POWs who wanted to join the guerrillas and gave them an assignment to help us while serving in the enemy forces. One of the officers who returned to the puppet Manchukuo army after being educated by us was a company commander. He informed us that a "Jiandao area punitive force" had been organized, that his company had been attached to the force, that the "punitive" operations would be launched in early October on an unprecedentedly large scale, and that if the revolutionary army did not take countermeasures promptly, it might suffer heavy losses.

Thanks to his information, we were able to take time to prepare against the enemy attack.

This scheme of a "special clean-up campaign" was quite extraordinary.

In the first place, it involved all the Japanese and puppet Manchukuo army and police in an unprecedented "punitive" offensive.

It was, in fact, a large-scale war that was to mobilize as many as 200,000 army and police troops from Japan and Manchukuo, including even paramilitary organizations of all types, under the direct supervision and command of Umez, chief of the Kwantung Army, and the Public Security Minister for the puppet state of Manchukuo.

After we declared war against Japan, the Japanese imperialists launched annual "punitive" operations against us, enlarging the scope of these operations year after year.

Their siege operations in the years after 1934 and the "punitive" campaign in northern Dongbiandao from the autumn of 1936 on were large in scale.

The new "punitive" campaign being prepared in the name of the "special clean-up campaign", however, surpassed all previous campaigns not only in the number of men used but also in the size of the area in which it would be carried out.

During the "operations for public peace in northern Dongbiandao" in 1936 the theatre of operations of the "Tonghua Punitive Command", headed by Sasaki, was confined to one province, but the theatre of operations of the "Nozoe Punitive Command" in 1939 covered the three provinces of Jilin,

Tonghua and Jiandao, as well as Ningan County in Mudanjiang Province–our provinces in effect.

An article in *Manchukuo Army* describes part of the preparations for the "special clean-up campaign for maintaining public peace in the southeastern areas" as follows:

"The Kwantung Army budgeted three million *yen* for the campaign and says no more can be earmarked on any account. On October 1, the first day of the punitive campaign, Iimura, chief of staff of the Headquarters of the Kwantung Army, Hoshino Naoki, Minister of General Affairs of Manchukuo, Susukida Yoshitomo, Deputy Public Security Minister, and Kitabe, staff officer representing Major-General Nozoe, held a meeting. Kitabe explained the plan of the campaign, pointing out on a map the roads to be constructed or repaired, the location of communications and internment villages, and requested 30 million *yen* for the punitive campaign.

"Minister Hoshino promised that he would do his best to secure the fund. Paymaster-General Iizawa expressed his hope for the success in the campaign in the three provinces, adding that he would squeeze out the fund. Thus the thoroughgoing campaign for public peace was finally set in motion." (*Manchukuo Army*, p. 400, Lanxinghui)

The new campaign carried out by the "Nozoe Punitive Command" covered an area three to four times greater than the campaign carried out by the "Tonghua Punitive Command", with a commitment of 12.5 times the troop strength and 13 times the expenditures of the former. From these figures one can guess how much the Japanese military authorities expected from this "punitive" campaign.

The top hierarchy of the Japanese and Manchukuo army and police did not confine their campaign to military operations alone, but combined it with their "surrender-hunting operation", "ideological operation" and "operation to eradicate the basic roots". As a result, the campaign surpassed by far all previous campaigns of this sort in scope and depth and in the elaborateness of the means and methods used.

Launching the "punitive" campaign, the Japanese imperialists described it as a "sacred war" and "sacred punishment". We thought it quite ludicrous that they should "beautify" their campaign in that manner.

The Japanese had provoked a number of aggressive wars but they had

never declared actual war, nor had they described their activities as a war. It had been their habit to rationalize and validate their acts of war by describing them as “events” or “incidents”.

Their designation of the new “special clean-up campaign” as a “sacred war” and “sacred punishment” was therefore quite meaningful. It showed that the Japanese military authorities had abandoned their previous view of their confrontation with the People’s Revolutionary Army as a one-sided “punitive” campaign or a “clean-up of bandits” and began to see it as a genuine bilateral conflict.

The great leader Comrade Kim Il Sung also explained why the Japanese imperialists were forced to launch a total war at that time and what objectives they planned to reach through the war.

Owing to the successive failures of the Japanese in the Sino-Japanese War and in the Battle of Khalkhin-Gol, the Japanese military was suffering from inner turmoil.

The Sino-Japanese War, which they had bragged would be finished in three months or half a year at the most, was dragging on for two years without any hope of victory. The main force of the Japanese army had been drawn deep into the quagmire of war.

Certain sections of the Japanese military ascribed their failure in China’s mainland and in Khalkhin-Gol to the factional strife among themselves, or to the backwardness of their military and technical equipment; at the same time, quite a few military bureaucrats and experts pointed the finger at the harassment of the People’s Revolutionary Army in the rear, which brought about instability of their rear, disconnection of supply routes and confused war psychology. It is true that the enemy suffered great losses because of repeated attacks by the People’s Revolutionary Army in the rear.

Apparently this made the Japanese come to their senses. They realized that they could carry out neither the war against China nor operations against the Soviet Union with the People’s Revolutionary Army constantly plaguing them from behind. They had to change their view of the anti-Japanese guerrilla army.

As you see, the inevitable result of their assessment of the fight against the People's Revolutionary Army was that they drew up the new plan of a "special clean-up campaign for maintaining public peace in the southeastern areas" and went on to implement this plan through all-out war. This campaign was aimed at wiping out the People's Revolutionary Army once and for all.

Nozoe's orders took the form of the boast that he would annihilate our army. He declared that as the guerrilla army had not decreased, despite repeated "punitive" operations over several years in the three provinces of Jilin, Jiandao and Tonghua, he was taking up a high mission–to ride his horse to Mt. Paektu and root out the evil bandits with a single stroke of his sword. He ordered his men to wipe out the People's Revolutionary Army to the last man.

From his statement that he would finish off "the evil bandits" on Mt. Paektu with a quick stroke of his sword, one can see that the enemy's main target was the Korean People's Revolutionary Army.

We closely examined the strategy and tactics to be used by the enemy in the large-scale campaign of a total war and discovered that the Japanese military authorities, on the basis of their long study and review of our own guerrilla tactics, were going to adopt a new fighting method–that of countering guerrilla tactics with guerrilla tactics.

We were able to confirm this insidious plan after reading their reference book for operations against "bandits", which we had managed to obtain. In those days the enemy distributed to each unit of the "punitive" force a printed collection of their experiences in the "punitive" operations against us. It was a sort of anti-guerrilla warfare manual.

The Japanese military authorities dressed the soldiers of their special units for anti-guerrilla warfare in uniforms like ours and demanded that they drill and behave like guerrillas. All this shows how hard they now studied and worked on their tactics to wipe out the KPRA.

I knew that the showdown with Nozoe would be a fierce fight, and that if we wanted to emerge victorious in this fight, we ourselves would have to work out and employ new tactics we had never used before.

In order to frustrate the offensive of hundreds of thousands of enemy

troops and ensure the continuous upsurge of the revolution, we had to invent ingenious tactics that would render our operations more elaborate and energetic than ever before. We adopted large-unit circling operations for this purpose. In brief, this meant long-term mobile operations by large forces moving around in a vast area over a number of secret routes. These operations would not be mere manoeuvres, but mobile actions combined with attacks on the enemy by various methods. Without such mobile operations it would be impossible to emerge victorious in the fight against a 200,000-strong enemy force.

The net of “district punitive forces” and “subdistrict punitive forces”, cast out by the “Nozoe Punitive Command”, spread not only over the three provinces of Jilin, Jiandao and Tonghua, but also over Ningan, Dongning and Muling in Mudanjiang Province in northern Manchuria. One slip and we might be caught in the mesh of this vast network.

While studying the network carefully, we found it tight in some places and loose in others. In certain areas the net had already been cast and in others it was in the process of being cast. The mesh size was diverse. The “punitive” forces had been deployed in all counties in Jiandao, the main theatre of our operations.

We planned to direct our movement first towards the area west of Dunhua and Emu. These two counties had many of our underground organizations, and the people there had gone through revolutionary training. We could easily find our foothold in this area. If we attacked the enemy there, we could draw the enemy’s attention to this location. We would then move to Mengjiang, Fusong and Changbai, where we would make a sharp turn to create havoc there. When the enemy came running to Mengjiang, Fusong and Changbai, following our traces, we would once again do an about-face and return to our original place through the southern tip of Jiandao Province. This was my plan. I estimated that this round movement would take us about one year.

It was my opinion that these circling operations should be conducted by a large force. The aim of the operations was not to avoid the enemy, but to attack him at points favourable to us. When attacking the enemy, we had to

annihilate him so that he could have no chance to recover, and for this we had to perform our circling operation with a large force.

I attached special importance to the secrecy of these circling routes. If the routes were revealed, we might be caught by the enemy's "tick tactics" or in his mesh and fall into enormous difficulties. But there was one serious problem with these operations: the difficulty of obtaining provisions. In the case where the guerrillas operated in a fixed area, they could obtain provisions in advance and keep them in storage in the secret camps. But in the case of a large force constantly moving around throughout the entire winter, things would be far different.

Unless the food problem was resolved, our large-unit circling operations would be impossible. This was why I held back the plan of operations for some time, not making it public even after I had drawn it up.

As I set out the routes of our activities, I planned to order the 7th and 8th Regiments and the Guard Company to store provisions in advance at certain key points we would be passing through–first in the northern area of Antu County, then in Huadian and Dunhua Counties. As crops were yet to be harvested, it was very difficult to obtain food at that time. We would be able to buy provisions after crops had been harvested and threshed, but in the present situation we could do nothing. Nor could we buy food from grain dealers in town.

I told the commanding officers who were just leaving on their mission to obtain provisions that they should buy unharvested crops. To obtain food, we would have to harvest the crops in the fields after purchasing them and do the threshing ourselves. It was an enormous, labour-consuming task beyond the capability of the whole unit, but there was no other choice.

In early October of that year, when the problem of provisions had been solved in the main, I convened a meeting of military and political cadres at Liangjiangkou, Antu County, where I formally declared my plan to conduct large-unit circling operations in the vast region northeast of Mt. Paektu.

One of the events I still remember from the days at Liangjiangkou and its vicinity is that a peasant brought to us his 14- or 15-year-old son and asked us to admit him into the KPRA.

Frankly speaking, recruiting a boy when we were about to start the trying, large-unit circling operations was a matter that required deep thought. I explained to the boy that we were an army that walked day and night, and that some days we had to walk 40 kilometres or even 80 kilometres. I asked him if he could keep up with us. The boy, pointing to Ri O Song, replied that if that guerrilla brother walked, he would, too.

I asked the peasant if he would not be worried about his son in the guerrilla army. He asked me in turn how I thought he could send his son into the army without doing some deep thinking first, then added that he believed in me and that it would set his mind at ease to think of his boy doing his bit. As the old saying has it, he concluded, mugwort grows straight in a hemp field.

The boy was clever and his father was also an excellent man. I decided to admit the boy into the army.

Some people told me they thought I was taking a burden on myself, but the majority of officers and men were delighted, saying that when they saw the Commander recruiting such a young boy, they felt pretty sure that the forthcoming operations would succeed. They judged that otherwise the Commander would not volunteer to take on this "burden".

I took him along with me with my orderlies. Quick-eyed and agile, he matured fast. When I went to Liangjiangkou for the meeting, I took him with me. Soon after the meeting we started on our way back. We knew the way would not be smooth, for Nozoe's first stage of "punitive" operations had started, and the circumstances were very strained. We had to move in great stealth, with a scout party ahead.

In the vicinity of Jiguanlazi we were surprised by the enemy. The name of the place originated from a peak there, which resembled the comb of a cock. The peak soared to the left of the way we were taking. The terrain of Jiguanlazi was such that it was highly favourable for the enemy to waylay us and very unfavourable for us to defend ourselves. I was fairly sure that the enemy, if he were in this vicinity at all, would not miss this terrain feature. He would be lying in ambush, since he was attempting to wipe out the anti-Japanese guerrillas through guerrilla tactics. However, we could not change the march

route and take a long, roundabout way. I gave the order to pass through the danger zone quickly, with a machine-gun in the van of the column.

When we reached the area, loud shots rang out all of a sudden from the direction of the peak. The enemy had opened up fire as our column was marching through the narrow, unforked lane.

This attack inflicted fatal wounds on a veteran nicknamed “Shorty” and on Kim Jong Dok.

I was worried over the boy who had joined the guerrillas in Liangjiangkou, so I called to him. He was firing back at the enemy on the height. It was surprising to think that he had gathered such courage in this critical situation. The boy even tried to take care of me, shouting, “Don’t move, Comrade Commander.”

“No, I must move. Keep changing your position as you fire,” I shouted back.

Then I drew him to a hollow behind a mound of earth nearby.

Meanwhile, the enemy bullets were flying around us ceaselessly. It was quite a predicament. I saw a ditch about 100 metres away in the field and rushed to it, ordering my men to follow me. They rushed to the ditch after me, helping the wounded. But the ditch proved not to be safe either.

We ran down to a river and rushed along its bank for a few minutes, then advanced towards the cliff occupied by the enemy. I had no time to explain to my men why we were heading that way. As I ran towards the enemy position without explanation, the men might have been sceptical. They would have wondered what I had in mind, since it was impossible to charge against so many enemy soldiers with our tiny force of fewer than ten men. Nevertheless, they rushed after me without hesitation. Just as I trusted them fully, they trusted me absolutely.

We reached the bottom of the cliff, while the enemy bullets continued to fly over our heads. I think it was at this point the men saw what I was trying to do.

Thinking that we had escaped across the field, the enemy fired towards it aimlessly. Then the enemy soldiers ran down from the height and encircled

the field, raising a great roar. In the meantime, we climbed the adjacent height. Having surrounded the field on three sides, they continued firing at each other for a good while.

The Battle at Jiguanlazi can be called our first encounter with the Nozoe "punitive" force. This battle was clear proof that the enemy had studied our guerrilla tactics in depth before the new campaign. At the same time, I was convinced that my plan of large-unit circling operations was a right tactical choice. The battle had been a microcosm of the military circumstances we would find ourselves in during that winter.

By the time I returned from the meeting at Liangjiangkou, my men had finished preparing the provisions. The sewing-unit had also made almost all the uniforms I had ordered.

We called the first stage of our operations the expedition to Dunhua. You can understand the course to be from Hualazi straight to Dunhua and then Mengjiang and Fusong. We intended to march from Hualazi towards Mt. Paektu, then turn to the north to fight various big battles in the backwoods of Dunhua before moving into dense forests of Dongpaizi in Mengjiang County, or in Baishitan in Fusong County, then finally take a rest and conduct military and political training during the coldest season in one of our secret camps.

While making preparations for the first stage of the operations, I sent the Independent Battalion and a platoon of the Guard Company to Dongpaizi under the command of Rim Su San, as well as a small unit to Baishitan. Their mission was to prepare secret camps, provisions and uniforms for the main force.

After these preparations we set out on the expedition to Dunhua. You can have a better understanding of the expedition if you remind yourselves of the Battles of Liukesong and Jiaxinzi. These two battles were fought on the expedition to Dunhua.

In order to disguise the expedition route we first marched to the upper reaches of the Erdao River as if we were moving towards Samjang.

Day was breaking when we were about a dozen kilometres from Hualazi. We got away from the river, erased our footprints and went into a nearby forest to take a rest. Refreshing ourselves with breakfast, we marched towards Mt.

Paektu, leaving a single line of footprints. In the vicinity of Mt. Neidao we changed our course by 180 degrees to make our way to the north along the frozen Sandaobai River. This was all aimed at confusing the enemy once more.

Reversing the course of a march in that way made as strong an impact on the enemy as did several battles. The confused enemy would roam about here and there, either freezing to death in the unmapped areas, or losing combat efficiency from exhaustion. In this way we set afloat misleading rumours and left false trails in order to drag enemy troops on our tail as long as possible, wearing them out and leaving them incapable of moving any further from cold and fatigue.

When crossing over the Mudan Pass, we ourselves were also greatly troubled by the snow, which fell in large flakes, turning all the rocks on the pass slippery with a coat of ice. We had to move very slowly.

Our main force crossed over the Mudan Pass safely and disappeared into the forest of Dunhua.

The large-unit circling operations were beset with hardships and difficulties like this from the outset. But it was a thrilling start. On the first leg of our expedition to Dunhua we did not fight large battles. We struck the enemy only when it was necessary to keep our routes secret. Nevertheless, the enemy suffered heavy casualties.

Whenever he recollected the expedition to Dunhua, the great leader mentioned the meeting of the Anti-Japanese Youth League that took place in the midst of the march.

On the Dunhua expedition we held a meeting of the Anti-Japanese Youth League. The AJYL was a youth organization that developed from the Young Communist League, which had been dissolved according to the decision adopted at the Nanhutou meeting. The league meeting had to be held for an unavoidable reason.

There is a place named Sidaohuanggou in Dunhua where some years ago I had recuperated for a while after being released from the Jilin Prison and where I had reorganized destroyed organizations. It was in the vicinity of this place

that we arrived first after crossing over the Mudan Pass. One of my men, who had been to the village to find out how things were there, brought news of the reaction of the secret organization there to the Pak Tuk Pom incident.

Briefly, the incident involved Pak Tuk Pom, a commanding officer of the People's Revolutionary Army, who had blackened the honour of the revolutionary army merely to get his hands on some supplies.

His unit was very short of provisions and clothing at one point. When supplies were running short, the People's Revolutionary Army used to strike the enemy to capture their supplies, or obtained them with the help of revolutionary organizations. Those were the proper ways to obtain supplies. However, Pak neither thought of fighting a battle, nor did he try to appeal to underground organizations. He was afraid of fighting, so he tried to cover the shortage of provisions and clothing through quite a cowardly method. One feels ashamed to even talk about his method in public.

Pak told an enemy agent, "I'm going to surrender to your side with my division. But right now that's difficult, because our clothes are all torn and we lack provisions. Prepare such-and-such amounts of provisions and cloth, then bring them to a place we'll fix up. I will ensure that my men change their uniforms and recover a little before bringing them to you. But I don't feel safe only with your assurance since you're only an agent. When you bring the provisions and clothing, send along your representatives, who can guarantee our safety after we surrender."

The enemy agent agreed and reported all this to his special operation squad. The enemy was greatly interested in this bargain. The enemy bosses in Jilin Province and Dunhua County gathered together soon after they received the report and discussed the measures to be taken. Then they sent their representatives to the rendezvous.

Pak greeted them and held his negotiations with them. When his subordinate officer entered the conference room during the negotiations and reported that the promised materials had all arrived, Pak suddenly pulled out his gun and shot to death all the enemy representatives on the spot. He was severely criticized by us for this and was transferred to the Guard Brigade. In

1940, when he was taken prisoner, he did, in fact, betray the organization and surrender to the enemy. His false surrender had become real surrender.

After this betrayal, Pak formed a “Pak special corps” and ran around, trying to induce his former comrades-in-arms to surrender as well.

The lesson taught by the Pak Tuk Pom incident was very serious. When I heard that he had surrendered, I thought that his false surrender farce had not been entirely accidental. Such a thing can be conceived only by one who is liable to surrender in fact as well as in fancy. His example shows that a man who fabricates a false surrender can commit true surrender any time.

What I found more serious, however, was that quite a few people looked upon Pak’s shabby, deceitful method of obtaining supply materials as a great act. Worse still, the guerrilla who had been to Sidaohuanggou to reconnoitre was of the opinion that Pak, who had carried out a “laudable” deed, had been punished too severely and should have been shown the appreciation due to him. When he was making his report on the outlook of the people there, he was ill-disposed towards them, as they had said that Pak was an officer who had played havoc with the prestige of the guerrilla army. The guerrilla reporting to me was a member of the AJYL.

The fact that a member of the AJYL was favourably disposed towards Pak’s deed was an extremely dangerous thing. I talked to the officer in charge of youth work. He told me that quite a large number of the AJYL members in the directional army were speaking of the incident in the same way as the scout had done. I realized that there were obviously problems with the ideological outlook of the AJYL members, and so I told the commanding officer to convene a meeting of the league members immediately. He replied that they had all fallen asleep the moment they arrived at the camp.

This kind of thing had never happened before. On arrival at a camping site, everyone usually got busy cleaning their weapons, patching their torn clothing, shaving and cutting firewood. They had always lived in such a well-disciplined manner–but not that night. Of course, it was true that they were extremely tired after the march; nevertheless, it was quite disgraceful that they had fallen fast asleep without even setting up camp. With this kind of mental

state, we would never be able to carry out the mobile operations full steam.

That night I made O Jung Hup vacate the tent of a company and called a meeting of the AJYL. I was also at the meeting.

The tendency towards hazy ideology revealed among the league members, their lack of the spirit to surmount difficulties, even their neglect of simple hygiene and the half-hearted participation in cultural recreation work among the young guerrillas were criticized. Measures to rectify these shortcomings were discussed.

At the meeting I also pointed out to them the dangerous nature of the Pak Tuk Pom incident. I emphasized especially that each and every guerrilla should maintain sharp vigilance at all times against deviations that could damage the authority and honour of the People's Revolutionary Army, that they all had to wage a strong struggle against such deviations and keep good relations with the people at all times.

This meeting awakened the commanding personnel to their duty. Some officers had tacitly consented to their men falling asleep without making preparations for camping; they had done nothing about it, as they had felt sympathy for them. After the meeting they realized that they had been wrong.

The meeting was a form of ideological mobilization for attacking Liukesong and Jiaxinzi. This ideological mobilization proved effective, for when we attacked Liukesong after the meeting, all the men fought bravely. They also fought with great success in the Battle of Jiaxinzi. After these two battles the guerrillas understood why their Commander had convoked the AJYL meeting all of a sudden.

The more difficult our work and the graver our situation, the more efficiently must we conduct ideological work. I insist on the importance of ideology. I maintain that ideology must come first and I value ideology far more than any wealth. When we had to fight do-or-die battles with a 200,000-strong enemy force, we drew up a great plan for large-unit circling operations and carried it out forcefully. What did we have to rely on at that time? We relied on the perfect unity of all the guerrillas and their steadfast conviction of the revolutionary idea. Did we have planes or tanks? We had

people, soldiers, light weapons, and that was all. So we fought our battles after ideological mobilization, and this proved highly effective.

The respected leader Comrade Kim Il Sung also recollected that the original plan of operations had to be changed during the expedition. This was due to Rim Su San's neglect of his duty.

Just before the AJYL meeting Kim Jong Suk and Ri Tu Ik came to Headquarters and reported a disturbing state of affairs at the secret camp in Dongpaizi. When embarking on the expedition to Dunhua, I intended to spend the coldest one or two months in Dongpaizi, make a circle through Fusong and Changbai Counties, proceed to the homeland, and then by way of Helong return to Antu, the place we had started the expedition. This all had to be changed because Rim Su San, who had been dispatched to Dongpaizi, had not made any preparations for receiving the main force. On the excuse that the situation was too difficult and strained, he neglected to make the strenuous efforts needed to carry out the tasks I had given him. Worried over this neglect, Kim Jong Suk and Ri Tu Ik tried to perform the task in place of Rim, but the provisions they had obtained were barely enough as winter supplies for the men already at the secret camp in Dongpaizi.

Because of this, I concluded that we could not use the route we had planned at the outset. It was impossible for the main force to depend on a secret camp where proper provisions had not been stored.

Rim Su San was, in fact, already at that time seriously degenerate. Later he was to run away to the enemy camp, which shows that treachery does not take place in just one day or two. It results from slow corruption, or from ideological fermentation. Ideological corruption will go through a certain process. Although Rim Su San shouted revolution whenever he spoke, he had already degenerated by the time of the "Hyesan incident". We had only failed to discover it because we trusted him.

Baishitan, Fusong County, which we had planned as an alternate destination, was far away from villages, though its terrain features were

favourable. A few villages could be found about half a dozen miles away from the secret camp in Baishitan, but there were not many of our underground organizations in the area.

Provisions would also pose a problem. There was a certain amount of grain, which a small unit and O Paek Ryong had obtained and stored up by the Songhua River. But the store was far away from the camp, and the food had been intended to be consumed in later days. We had sent an advance party to Baishitan, but most of it consisted of women and infirm people.

In this situation it was inconceivable for a large force to go straight to Baishitan by the alternate route. We found ourselves in a quandary. A cold snap was approaching, but the planned route had not been prepared for use, there was no spare time to prepare a new route and the enemy was at our heels; under these conditions we could not hang about at the foot of Mudan Pass for much longer. We were faced with a real dilemma.

If only food were available, we could endure whatever difficulties faced us. At that time, some sympathetic people appeared to help us, and with their aid we were able to buy a whole field of unharvested beans. In this way we were able to ride over the crisis.

Then we attacked the lumber mills in Liukesong and Jiaxinzi and captured various materials, including grain. We immediately changed the course of our march by 180 degrees to the south and went to the secret camp at Baishitan. We can say that this was the terminal of the first stage of the large-unit circling operations.

The battles at Liukesong and Jiaxinzi were the high points of the first stage of the operations. It was a surprising success that we were able to slip away from the Helong and Antu areas, where the enemy's "punitive" forces had cast tight nets. The enemy was left aghast when we attacked all their strategic points in Dunhua in succession at lightning speed. Receiving the urgent message that Liukesong and Jiaxinzi had been raided and their troops annihilated, the enemy threw their forces into the Dunhua area in great haste, but by that time we had already slipped to the south and reached the area along the Songhua.

I consider one of our greatest successes in the first stage of the operations to be the fact that we expanded our armed ranks with 200 recruits from the lumber mills in Liukesong and Jiaxinzi.

After the battles we staged a performance in the forest on the Songhua, and after the performance many young people volunteered to join the guerrillas from among the workers who had followed us, carrying our supplies. Admitting into our ranks so many young people of working-class origin was an auspicious event, the first of its kind in the history of the anti-Japanese guerrilla army. As we could not supply them with weapons and uniforms, we gave each recruit an armband with a red star sewn on it as soon as we admitted him. I still remember that the women guerrillas worked through the whole night to make those armbands.

The military and political training conducted at the secret camp in Baishitan was the start of the second stage of the large-unit circling operations, as well as a review of the first stage of the operations.

After making full preparations at Baishitan, we started off on the second stage. The plan of the second stage was to march from Baishitan through Erdaobaihe, Sandaobaihe and Sidaobaihe (the no man's land northeast of Mt. Paektu), advance to the homeland and then go back to Antu County via Helong County.

While we were giving military and political training at Baishitan, the secret camp was suddenly exposed to the enemy. The soybeans that one food-securing party had brought in sacks were the cause of the trouble, a simple thing that developed into quite a perplexing situation. Our men did not spot a hole in a sack, so the beans escaped through the hole, bean by bean, and this was spotted by an enemy agent.

On receiving information that the enemy, having discovered the whereabouts of the secret camp, was making preparations for a full-scale surrounding and attacking operation, we planned a move that would cope with the situation. First, I ordered a commanding officer to take with him a company and raid Liangjiangkou in the enemy area, then slip away to Xiaweizi. Next, I ordered a platoon from the Guard Company to strike the

enemy at posts situated on the height at the back of Baishitan, then withdraw to the Lushui River.

In command of the main force, I left the secret camp 30 minutes before the start of the enemy attack and moved to the Lushui. In order to lure the enemy into the trap, we had to feign to be staying in the secret camp.

As soon as we evacuated the camp, the enemy surrounded it. Seeing a quiet camp that offered no resistance, they thought that the place was as good as occupied. They charged the camp at a rush. For all that, the sharpshooters in our Guard Company did not fire a shot; they only watched the enemy in action.

As day broke, enemy planes appeared over the secret camp and dropped bombs on the heads of their own soldiers, who were waving joyfully up at them. The others who were in the barracks rushed out at the sound of explosions. At that moment our machine-guns opened fire.

The simultaneous air-ground attack the enemy had planned turned out to be a joint operation by the People's Revolutionary Army and the Japanese air force, together annihilating the Japanese and Manchukuo infantry.

While the enemy forces were in the midst of their uproar in Baishitan, we calmly marched down towards Mt. Paektu, struck the enemy at our heels in Lushuihe, crossed the Erdaobai River and disappeared into a forest east of Mt. Neidao. Then I reassembled the company that had advanced to Liangjiangkou after raiding a lumber mill near Hualazi, and the Guard Company that had been left in Baishitan. It is probably at that time that I dispatched a reconnaissance team to Samsuphyong in Musan, Korea.

Because of the tight watch by the border guard, the reconnaissance team was chased by the enemy from the moment they crossed the Tuman River. They returned without being able to carry out a proper reconnaissance, narrowly escaping death. In this situation it would be a risky adventure for a large force to march into the homeland.

I decided to postpone the plan of advancing into the homeland for the time being. Instead, we raided a large lumber mill, just to obtain provisions and also to feel out the reaction of the enemy in Korea across the Tuman. We attacked a mill near the river in Damalugou, and the enemy's reaction on the

other side of the river was quite explosive. Having received the report that the enemy was strengthening its border watch, I moved the unit to a forest south of Hualazi after fighting for a few days with the enemy troops at our heels. After this we fought a big battle with Maeda's unit at Hongqihe, and thus concluded the large-unit circling operations.

Our series of confrontations with the Nozoe "punitive" force should not be viewed as a mere regional skirmish with an enemy commander and his troops. This was actual war against the military authorities of Japan and the Japanese Empire. The enemy did not succeed in any of its three-way operations–military, ideological and "rooting up basic evils"–to which they had given so much publicity through the so-called "outline plan for cleaning up bandits". Their plans all ended in failure, and in the long run it was we who emerged as the victors in this war.

Nozoe lived out the rest of his life in retirement in a rural village of Kyushu following the defeat of Japan. He wrote an article about the events of those days, which reads in part:

"Kim Il Sung's army operated in several detachments, each claiming itself to be Kim Il Sung's army. Its tactics were to give the impression that this army was everywhere. There must have been one man named Kim Il Sung, but several people went under the name of Kim Il Sung, so it was difficult to pinpoint just who the real Kim Il Sung was."

According to the recollections of Nagashima, who took part in the special operations of the Nozoe "punitive" force after winning the trust of his superior for suppressing the Jiandao revolt, we can see that he also had to swallow a bitter pill because of the elusive tactics of the Korean People's Revolutionary Army. He remembered it this way:

"When I was placed in charge of special operations in the Nozoe unit, I was told about the existence of Kim Il Sung's army. I discovered that the tactics employed by this army were very curious. When it was reported that this army had appeared in a certain place, we would rush there, but almost immediately there would be a report that it had appeared in yet another place. This army seemed to appear and disappear with preternatural swiftness, but in fact the same unit did not appear here and there simultaneously; he divided his army into several detachments and then had them appear in different places at once and claim to be Kim Il Sung's army."

Recollecting the hard battles fought with the Korean People's Revolutionary Army, Nagashima continued, "All the high-ranking cadres of the Anti-Japanese Allied Army were either killed, captured or surrendered, but only Kim Il Sung managed to... survive and return to north Korea at the end of the war. He is now Premier."

4. O Jung Hup and His 7th Regiment

One year while reading the novel *Heavy Battle Area*, the great leader Comrade Kim Il Sung felt such grief at the scene where O Jung Hup falls in battle that he stopped reading and stayed up all night remembering the man who had died so many years before.

Whenever he talked about the Battle of Liukesong in Dunhua County, a brilliant battle that closed the first stage of the large-unit circling operations, the fatherly leader recollected the last moments of O Jung Hup; and whenever he looked back upon his heroic life, he recounted with strong feelings of affection the fighting spirit of the 7th Regiment, which defended the Headquarters of the Korean revolution with heroic deeds and great sacrifice of life during the anti-Japanese revolution.

We lost O Jung Hup in the Battle of Liukesong. In that battle we also lost company commander Choe Il Hyon and machine-gun platoon leader Kang Hung Sok. I treasured and loved these three officers dearly, and I lost them all at the same time. I was bereaved of many of my comrades-in-arms during the war against Japan, but the loss of O Jung Hup was the most heartbreaking tragedy of all.

To sketch O Jung Hup in brief: he was a man who cast a large shadow, though he was not an extrovert. When I say he cast a large shadow, I mean that he was a man of great exploits who made his mark wherever he appeared.

No officers in our unit were probably as quiet as Choe Chun Guk and O Jung Hup. A quiet manner may be construed as unobtrusive or discreet or unassuming. O Jung Hup was unusually quiet and modest for a military officer, and though not boisterous socially, performed great deeds as a fighter. He was so unpretentious and simple that he did not think to push himself forward.

The others compared Choe Chun Guk to a bride, but O was even more modest than Choe. O was the sort of man it was hard to find fault with.

Quiet and reserved as he was in his everyday life, O was a man of strong determination in the revolution, a tiger-like man charging forward through thick and thin once he made a decision. He always finished what he started, brushing aside all difficulties. He would not sleep or rest until he had carried out his assignment.

He had a strong sense of fair play and never compromised with injustice. I think because of this quality he became class-conscious earlier than most others.

One year his family had a crop failure because of drought. His father explained the problem to the landlord and pleaded with him for leniency. The miserly, cruel landlord, however, showed no sympathy and accused O's father of being a thief. He even raised his walking stick to hit the old man. O Jung Hup, who was watching this scene nearby, could not bear it and whipped the landlord with his flail. He was 14 or 15 years old at the time. One can see from this how strong was his sense of justice even in his adolescence.

A man with a strong sense of justice awakens to class-consciousness and participates in the revolution early. He then grows into a stalwart fighter who risks his life in the van of the revolution.

According to his uncle, O Thae Hui, O Jung Hup was fond of playing at being a soldier of the Independence Army in his childhood. Kim Jwa Jin used to come to their village, riding his horse with its bluish mane. This drew the boy towards the Independence Army. He came to communism later under the influence of his cousin, O Jung Hwa. He acquired revolutionary awareness early in life because he felt strong hatred and resistance against the enemy who had robbed him of his country.

Recalling him now, I can't think of another officer as audacious and courageous as O Jung Hup.

It has been said from olden days that renowned generals, when training their soldiers in the art of war, always attached the most importance to

audacity, courage, intelligence and virtue and strove to cultivate these characteristics in their men. Why does a tigress roll her cub over a cliff? Quite simply, to teach it courage.

Although he had never attended military school nor been the disciple of a master in the martial arts, he cultivated his own revolutionary audacity and courage in the flames of the anti-Japanese struggle.

During the raid on a gold mine near Sandaogou, Helong County, fought on the eve of the Harvest Moon Day in 1939, he left a trail of anecdotes behind him.

When he was commanding the raid, an enemy bullet hit him in the forehead. But he was not killed because the bullet apparently did not penetrate the bone. By a miracle he survived and continued commanding the battle, even though a bullet had hit him in the forehead. It was quite incredible that the thin skull of a man could resist a bullet, but it was true. I saw the wound after it had been dressed by his orderly.

When his comrades told him that he had been quite fortunate and God had blessed him, he scoffed, saying that the stray bullets of the Japanese might pierce a coward's skull, but never a communist's.

While he was continuing to command the battle, a hand grenade the enemy had thrown flew over the wall of the fortress and fell just beside the feet of the guerrillas. It was a hair-raising moment. O Jung Hup calmly picked it up and tossed it back over the wall. As their own grenade flew back at them, the enemy soldiers scattered in terror in all directions. O lost no time and ordered his men to charge after them.

Isn't this another miracle? A hand grenade is a lethal weapon effective for use over short distances with two or three seconds' time from the moment of throwing to the moment of explosion. Picking up a hand grenade on the brink of explosion was an appalling risk, but O Jung Hup took the risk without turning a hair.

Just from these two anecdotes you can see what type of a man O Jung Hup was.

He was incredibly adroit in battle. His greatest merits as a commanding

officer were, first, the speed with which he judged a situation and made a decision, and second, the precision with which he organized a battle. Once his decision was made, he had a special talent for carrying it out resolutely and without a moment's hesitation: like a skilled wrestler who outmanoeuvres his powerful opponent by employing excellent moves, he never failed to defeat an enemy, however strong, by using appropriate tactics. He was, in fact, a fighter no less efficient than Choe Hyon or Choe Chun Guk, but since he always worked together with Headquarters, he was not as well known as they were.

I have been engaged in the revolution for several decades, but I have seen few people who had as strong a sense of organization and discipline as O Jung Hup. These characteristics manifested themselves, first, in his regarding the orders of his superiors as absolute and in accepting them without reserve. When he was given an assignment he accepted it without question, saying simply, "Yes, I will do it." He never made excuses to get out of any undertaking.

He would carry out my orders thoroughly and within the set time. If I gave him a command to carry out a mission in a certain place and arrive at a certain rendezvous by a certain date, he would get there at the set time after carrying out the mission without fail. If something unexpected came up in the course of carrying out the mission, he would leave a small unit to finish the job and he himself would return by the appointed time with his main force. He would use the opportunity to educate and encourage his men, saying that the Comrade Commander would worry if they failed to return by the fixed time.

He was an exemplary officer also in always following my instructions in managing his regiment and educating and training his men. In the cramped and awkward circumstances of guerrilla life, he managed his regiment in as assiduous and meticulous a fashion as if he were in a regular army. In his 7th Regiment no soldier was allowed to wear worn-out shoes or torn trousers. If he saw his men wearing torn uniforms on the march, he would make sure they all patched them up during the next break. Since he managed his unit efficiently, none of his men had accidents or ran into any kind of trouble.

He even accepted whatever I might say to myself in passing as an order or

demand of the Commander.

One day in 1939, with the Harvest Moon Day just around the corner, I took a stroll with O Paek Ryong in the secret camp at Wukoujiang. As we walked, I happened to mumble to myself that the Harvest Moon Day was approaching.

Somehow, O Jung Hup heard what I said. He did not overlook it, for he was more responsive than anybody to my intentions and wishes. He construed it thus in his own way: Why did the Comrade Commander say that the Harvest Moon Day was approaching? Did he mention it because he was worried over preparations for the festival, knowing that the young recruits would be homesick on the day of the festival? A few days later he organized a battle just to prepare for the festival, returning with a large quantity of provisions and foods, including moon-shaped rice-cakes. At the request of O Jung Hup on the festival day I explained the origin of moon-shaped cakes to the soldiers of the 7th Regiment and to my Headquarters staff.

O Jung Hup was so faithful to me that he even recognized my gunshots. On the Arduous March we switched over from a large-unit movement to dispersed small-unit actions, which continued for some time. Parting with O Jung Hup at that time, I told him to meet me at Samsugol next spring. In those days Koreans called the valley of Shisandaogou, Samsugol.

Early in March 1939 I organized a raid on a village in Samsugol. As he heard the gunshots, O said, “That’s Comrade Commander’s gunfire. Headquarters, with its strength of only one company, might possibly have been exposed and surrounded by the enemy. Comrades, we must rush to its defence.”

He then came running to us with his regiment at his heels.

O Jung Hup was a true man.

I will tell you what happened when he first joined the guerrillas after conducting underground activities in Wenjiadian, Wangqing County.

In those days the guerrillas in Wangqing were hopelessly short of weapons. There were many guerrillas and many more were volunteering to join, so the problem was that guns were in extremely short supply. The

guerrillas who had no rifles had to arm themselves with swords or spears, as you can see in the film, *Five Guerrilla Brothers*.

O Jung Hup, too, wore a sword made in a smithy when he started out. The Wangqing guerrilla unit kept the recruits without rifles at the rear of the column. When standing guard, O Jung Hup had to borrow another soldier's rifle. Nevertheless, he felt no shame in this. Because he had been wearing a sword for several months, his comrades would tease him whenever they met him.

One day I asked him seriously, "Jung Hup, don't you hate to tail after others, wearing just a sword?"

"I think this sword is a good enough weapon when there aren't enough rifles to go round. I'm sure I can capture a rifle in a battle some day."

Though he said this, he must still have felt awkward to be bringing up the rear, wearing only a sword and a grenade when others were carrying rifles. But he carried his sword calmly, without showing his feelings.

In order to capture guns for the recruits, we organized a battle. Actual combat was the only way for us to obtain arms. We therefore raided the construction site of a railway that runs from Tumen to Mudanjiang via Sanchakou.

In this raid O captured several rifles and a pistol from an enemy officer. Who was to keep a captured weapon was decided at the meeting to review the battle. We made it a principle to award rifles preferentially to those who had fought courageously and observed discipline in an exemplary manner. I attended the meeting that reviewed the raid on the railway construction site. Only at this meeting was O finally awarded a rifle.

Later he was promoted to squad leader, platoon leader, company commander and then regimental commander. One might call him the model officer of a revolutionary army.

He had many other merits in addition.

Though gentle, he was lively and optimistic in everyday life, sociable in his quiet way, and zealous to learn. Talking no nonsense, he conducted himself well, listened carefully to any criticisms handed out by his comrades

and rectified his mistakes immediately. He managed his unit with utmost care and had a stronger spirit of self-reliance and fortitude than others.

It would not be too much to say that the growth of O Jung Hup as a soldier of the Korean People's Revolutionary Army exactly paralleled the growth of the army's 7th Regiment.

The predecessor of the 7th Regiment was the Independent Regiment. The Independent Regiment had been composed of the companies each from Wangqing, Yanji, Helong and other counties in eastern Manchuria.

From Wangqing County it was the 7th Company that came to the regiment. The 7th Company had grown from a detachment of the Wangqing 1st Company and had become the 2nd Company of the Independent Regiment. O had been the youth instructor of the 2nd Company of the Independent Regiment.

The Independent Regiment then became the 2nd Regiment of the Independent 1st Division in 1935, and when the main-force division of the Korean People's Revolutionary Army was being formed after the Nanhutou meeting, it became the 7th Regiment of the division. The regiment was the nucleus of the new division.

O Jung Hup, O Paek Ryong and Kang Jung Ryong all developed systematically, along with the development of the 7th Regiment, and became either regimental commander, company commander or platoon leader.

The majority of the soldiers of the 7th Regiment were Koreans. As I had trained O Jung Hup methodically from his days in Wangqing, I made sure our efforts were concentrated on his regiment. More intensive guidance was given to it than any other unit to make it a model regiment with the strongest combat efficiency in the new division. In the first place I made sure that the commanding personnel of the regiment, including platoon leaders, political instructors and company commanders, were promoted from among elite soldiers and that they were trained politically, ideologically and militarily under a far-sighted plan. We taught them everything–various types of manuals for guerrilla warfare, how to set up camp, cook meals, march, find directions, set up makeshift stages, draw up programmes for art performances and write introductory speeches for the performances.

In order to turn the regiment into a model unit, Headquarters and the cadres of the division worked extra hard. They visited the regiment frequently, teaching the officers political and military affairs and helping them to solve problems quickly and efficiently. In the course of this, the 7th Regiment became the model regiment and pride of the main force of the Korean People's Revolutionary Army.

We sent many soldiers who had been trained in this regiment to other units as commanding officers. When he requested military and political cadres from us, Wei Zheng-min asked for the officers of the 7th Regiment in most cases. The commanding officers who had been trained in the 7th Regiment and had transferred to other units went on to train many other officers and model combatants. The 7th Regiment played the role of a seed-bed for future political and military cadres. The Guard Company commanded by Ri Tong Hak or Pak Su Man subsequently also became a model company, for a large number of its members hailed from the 7th Regiment.

Because there were no regular training establishments for the revolutionary army, we had to meet the demand for cadres by continually appointing military and political personnel trained in the 7th Regiment to other units. This proved to be good practice for later, for the work method of our Party of today–that of creating a model and generalizing it across the country–is based on the experience we gained during the anti-Japanese revolution.

Many of the military and political cadres of the Korean People's Revolutionary Army were produced by the 7th Regiment, among them O Jung Hup, Kim Ju Hyon, Ri Tong Hak, Ri Tong Gol, O Paek Ryong, Kim Thaek Hwan, Choe Il Hyon, O Il Nam, Son Thae Chun, Kang Hung Sok and Kang Jung Ryong. The political instructor of a company of the 7th Regiment was a man nicknamed "Wet Eyes". I think I remember his surname was Choe, but I cannot remember his full name. He had this nickname because his eyes always looked as if they were brimming with moisture. He fought bravely but fell in action along with Kim San Ho in the Battle of Xiaotanghe.

Choe Il Hyon was a man I intended to appoint as the commander of the Anti-Japanese People's Guerrilla Army, to be organized in northern Korea.

Kim Thaek Hwan, company commander, was also an intelligent man.

It seems to me that a strong commander is emulated by his subordinates–a regimental commander by his company commanders, a company commander by his platoon leaders, and a platoon leader or a squad leader by his men. People will resemble their leaders in personality and character in spite of themselves. I should say that the 7th Regiment became a steel-like unit because it totally resembled O Jung Hup.

The commanders and men of other units quite envied O's 7th Regiment.

Cao Guo-an, a division commander of the Chinese 1st Corps, while living with our unit for some time in the Paektusan Base, asked me for a clever man, an efficient machine-gunner. Cao was coveting Kang Jung Ryong, a machine-gunner and a renowned platoon leader in the 7th Regiment. Kang was Pak Rok Gum's husband. I asked him if he wanted to go to the 2nd Division of the 1st Corps, but he flatly refused. At first I thought he refused to go because he hated parting from his wife, but I found this was not the reason after hearing his explanation. He said that he could bear the thought of parting from his wife, but he hated leaving me and O Jung Hup's 7th Regiment. He was quite attached to O Jung Hup. The two men were childhood friends in Wangqing and fought shoulder to shoulder from their days with the Wangqing 1st Company.

O Paek Ryong, too, said that he would not leave the 7th Regiment led by O Jung Hup when he was appointed to the 8th Regiment as a machine-gunner.

You can guess from these two facts the degree of popularity O Jung Hup enjoyed. The men of the 7th Regiment had a strong attachment for their unit and a strong esprit de corps.

We sent those who made mistakes or who lacked political and military qualifications to the 7th Regiment for training.

At the secret camp near Xintaizi, Linjiang County, the leader of a machine-gun platoon committed a mistake in 1938. He also had poor qualifications. We attached him temporarily to the 4th Company of the 7th Regiment.

When sending him to O Jung Hup's regiment, I said to him, "A leader who does not know how to take responsibility for his men is not qualified for

his post. He can perform his duties properly only when he really feels the suffering his mistakes bring down upon his men. You'd better learn and train yourself more in the 7th Regiment."

When he returned to his original post after his stint with the 7th Regiment, he had become a different man, thanks to the help of O Jung Hup.

The 7th Regiment was the most efficient combat unit in the Korean People's Revolutionary Army. That was why Headquarters always assigned to this regiment the most urgent and responsible tasks. The regiment bore the brunt of all attacks launched by the Korean People's Revolutionary Army.

Both on the march and in bivouac I would assign the duty of acting as rear guard to the regiment with the highest combat efficiency and strongest sense of responsibility. The rear guard was extremely important to the life of the guerrilla army, which was always threatened with pursuit and surprise attack by the enemy.

When bivouacking, we used to post the most efficient unit as rear guard about 300 to 500 metres away from Headquarters, or sometimes at a distance of one or two kilometres. Sentries or watches were posted at regular intervals between Headquarters and the rear guard.

According to our experience, the enemy's "punitive" forces preferred the tactic of pursuit rather than the method of ambush or frontal attack. This was why we posted the unit with the highest combat efficiency to bring up the rear.

When bivouacking at Chongbong on our way to the Musan area in the spring of 1939 we kept the 7th Regiment in the rear. The men of the regiment did not make a campfire at night so as not to expose itself to the enemy. Nevertheless, they never complained about their hardship or fatigue.

I have stressed since the early days of the Korean People's Army that it should regard O Jung Hup as its model. This means emulating him.

Already in the early 1960s Comrade Kim Jong Il emphasized that the KPA should study and imitate the 7th Regiment. In his childhood he had heard a great deal about O Jung Hup and his 7th Regiment.

What, then, should cadres, Party members and the soldiers of the KPA learn from O Jung Hup and his 7th Regiment? His merits can be analysed in

various ways, but the most important of all his merits was his unfailing loyalty to the revolution.

How was his loyalty to the revolution expressed? It found its strongest expression in his loyalty to his Commander.

First of all he was faithful to all my ideas and policies, accepting all I said about the communist movement and national liberation movement of Korea as absolutely correct and studying my words in depth. He defended my ideas without reserve anywhere, under any circumstances, and fought staunchly against any practices that ran counter to these ideas.

He regarded my ideas and policies on military operations as supreme laws. No divergent ideas could find room in his mind, they made no sense to him. A man sound in ideology does not become corrupt even in unhealthy surroundings.

As the regimental commander himself was sound, his soldiers also all breathed the same air with me.

His faithfulness to the revolution found its expression in his spirit of implementing his Commander's orders and instructions without question and with a high sense of responsibility. He carried them out accurately, perfectly and without fail. However onerous they might be, he did not utter a word of discontent or complaint.

Having carried out my orders, he reported the results to me without fail and reviewed the defects revealed during their implementation, hiding nothing.

Another of his traits that our officials today should study in his attitude towards the Commander's orders and instructions was that immediately after carrying out one task, he used to ask for another. He hated hanging around and would find something else to do as soon as he'd finished one thing. To use our present-day parlance, he was a man of continuous innovation and continuous advance. Another reason why the 7th Regiment undertook harder tasks than other regiments was that O Jung Hup, the regimental commander, was such a willing worker.

He was a commanding officer of unusual character in that he was happier when given a difficult task than when carrying out an easy assignment.

His loyalty to the revolution and his Commander also found expression in his fearless defence of his Commander, not only politically and ideologically but also with his life. For my safety he plunged himself and his regiment into combat as if they were human bullets, and he did not hesitate to commit himself, no matter how hard-fought the battle.

When I was leading a tough battle in command of Ri Tu Su's company against hundreds of enemy troops in Hongtoushan, O Jung Hup, who was on a combat mission far away, raided the enemy camp like lightning, saying that he was worried about my safety. With their rear under fire, the remaining enemy were forced to flee. I was much obliged to O Jung Hup at that time.

When fighting near Manjiang it was O Jung Hup and his 7th Regiment that shielded me with their bodies as I commanded the withdrawal of my unit. They did the same during the Battle of Duantoushan. While Headquarters withdrew with hundreds of enemy troops at its heels, the 7th Regiment brought up the rear to cover the withdrawal.

His exceptional loyalty to his Commander manifested itself most intensely in the period of the Arduous March. During the first days of the march he defended Headquarters by using our zigzag tactic for an entire fortnight, withstanding the immense pressure of fighting a nonstop rear-guard action.

As I mentioned on a previous occasion, at the far end of Qidaogou during the march I judged that a large-unit movement was disadvantageous, so we switched over to dispersed actions. O Jung Hup, taking leave of me at that time, volunteered to act as a decoy Headquarters and lure away the enemy by trekking the steep Longjiang and Changbai mountains for two months or so. The 7th Regiment went through a lot of trouble, but thanks to this ploy, Headquarters was less harassed by the enemy for quite some time.

When parting with Headquarters at the end of Qidaogou, his regiment didn't have as much as a grain of rice. In order to obtain provisions, they needed to be close to inhabited areas. Nevertheless, O Jung Hup set his march route through Jiayuhe, the plateau in Sidengfang, the western fringe of Hongtoushan and the northern Shuangchatou to Deshuigou. This route traverses through unmapped areas no better than a desert. The only signs of

habitation were huts used by charcoal burners. One wrong step in these areas and a man would end up in a labyrinth of ice and snow and never get out alive.

Nevertheless, O Jung Hup chose this immensely dangerous route while devoid of provisions in order to lure away the enemy who was tailing Headquarters.

At first they raided a lumber yard, captured some cattle and horses and ate the meat. But after entering the deep mountains they could no longer obtain food. The only thing edible was snow, I was told.

One day, realizing that the enemy was no longer pursuing his regiment, he appealed to his men, saying, "I'm afraid the enemy may have realized that we are not Headquarters. If that's true, we have been suffering in vain. We must find out the enemy at all costs and get them back on our tail. Follow me."

With his Mauser in his hand he went several kilometres back the way they had traversed, going through all sorts of hardships and raiding the enemy camp. This brought the enemy back on the tail of the regiment.

From then on the regiment would backtrack and harass the enemy whenever it did not follow. After this, the enemy would trail after the regiment just like a bull calf led by its nose ring.

Having run out of food again at one point, the regiment boiled down the hide of a cow the Japanese soldiers had thrown away after eating its meat. The regiment continued its march and celebrated the lunar New Year's Day of that year, eating frozen potatoes. While eating them, O Jung Hup still worried about us, saying, "We are eating here on the mountain, even though it's only this kind of food, but I wonder what kind of food Headquarters has managed to find?"

He encouraged his hungry, exhausted men by saying, "We've seen nothing but hardship day in, day out, for ten years, but good times will come after the hard times. Imagine the day we return to our liberated motherland in triumph after defeating the Japanese imperialists. What can be more worthwhile and glorious than that for Koreans? We must not forget that this trying march is directly linked to the liberated motherland. That's what Commander Kim Il Sung said. We've all got to keep going for the safety of Headquarters."

O Jung Hup was a man of this type. He fought with a large fireball in his heart. The fireball was his burning enthusiasm for the revolution, and the core of his enthusiasm was none other than loyalty to his Commander.

I emphasize again that the 7th Regiment had this one characteristic: that every one of its men and officers thought first of the safety of Headquarters, no matter where they were or what the situation was. Its most militant traits both in life and in combat were to treasure the Commander's orders as they would do their own lives and to carry them out with the greatest efficiency. Not only were they more sensitive to the intentions of Headquarters than others, but they also carried out these intentions more perseveringly and with greater devotion once they had understood the aim of Headquarters.

Ri Kwon Haeng, who died while shielding me from enemy bullets with his body, was a member of the 7th Regiment, as were O Il Nam, Son Thae Chun and Kim Hyok Chol, who laid down their lives while implementing the orders of Headquarters.

O Jung Hup, Choe Il Hyon and Kang Hung Sok dedicated their lives to the defence of Headquarters and to my great regret fell in the Battle of Liukesong. This is why my heart is heavy whenever I look back upon the Battle of Liukesong. Of course, we fought the battle with good tactics, but we lost three precious commanding officers there.

At 10 o'clock that night O Jung Hup led the attack on the enemy barracks at Liukesong at the head of his 7th Regiment and Hwang Jong Hae's unit. They were the main force of attack. I don't know why, but I did not tell him that day to take care of himself. He was not the sort of man to listen to such words of precaution anyway. He was always at the forefront of the most difficult attacks.

Immediately after committing his 7th Regiment and Hwang Jong Hae's unit to action, I ordered the 8th Regiment to push into the lumber mill to conduct political work among the workers and to capture provisions and other supplies from the enemy's munitions store.

Leading the penetration party, O Jung Hup climbed over the wooden fence, cut through the barbed wire entanglements and ordered his men to

charge. The regiment occupied the forts and barracks at lightning speed without giving the enemy time to collect its forces. The hard-pressed enemy soldiers hid themselves in a passage dug under the barracks. O Jung Hup immediately gave the order to make a fire at the entrances of the underground passage. As smoke began to blow into the entrance, the enemy soldiers crawled outside on all fours, unable to bear it any longer.

Just as victory was in sight, we were dealt a tragic blow. As O Jung Hup led the search, the enemy still hiding in the underground passage shot him. His orderly, Kim Chol Man, was also wounded. The remaining enemy soldiers put up a desperate resistance, and Choe Il Hyon and Kang Hung Sok, two highly efficient officers of the 7th Regiment, then lost their lives. O Jung Hup, fatally wounded, also died that day to our deep sorrow. The man who had fought so devotedly for the revolution, treading a rocky road all through his life, died in this way.

All through the anti-Japanese armed struggle I had constantly stressed to my men that they should take particular care at the concluding stage of a battle. Accidents frequently happened at the last moment. We lost three precious comrades-in-arms in this battle in the last five minutes.

Apparently O Jung Hup was somewhat off his guard on this occasion. He seems to have been too confident, as the battle situation was favourable to us and the enemy soldiers were surrendering, unable to endure the smoke of the burning cotton.

By nature, O Jung Hup was a careful man. He lived a flawless life and fought with good strategy. He was more vigilant than any other officer. I don't know why he did not foresee the fact that some of the enemy might still be under his feet. In the first place the scouts had not reconnoitered the interior of the enemy barracks closely enough. If they had scouted it carefully, such an accident would not have taken place. It was a great pity. When the wounded Kim Chol Man came to me and reported, crying bitterly, the news of O Jung Hup's death, I could not believe my ears at first. As I ascertained the brutal fact, I almost lost my mind and rushed to the enemy barracks, shouting, "Who killed O Jung Hup? I can't forgive him!"

I was accustomed to suppressing my feelings in front of my men, no matter how excruciating the pain, but that day I could not endure it. How dearly had I loved him! Even to think of it now, I still tremble. That day we killed a large number of enemy soldiers and captured lots of booty, but it meant nothing to me. Never had my men felt such acute heartache as they did at the time.

At the order to withdraw, we left Liukesong carrying the bodies of our dead comrades-in-arms. Hundreds were marching, shedding tears; I could not hear a single word being spoken.

We held a memorial service in bitter grief. I stepped forward to deliver a memorial address, but I could not see or speak properly, as tears blurred my vision and I felt a heavy oppression in my chest. I never shed tears in the face of difficulties, but I can shed more tears than anybody in the face of grief.

The Battle of Liukesong was of great importance. It threw the enemy's second-stage "punitive" operations into confusion, and our unit laid a basis for winning victory in the first stage of the large-unit circling operations. As we shot off our guns in the backwoods of Dunhua, while the enemy was concentrating his forces, looking for us in the areas along the Tuman River northeast of Mt. Paektu, they could not but be dumbfounded.

At the Battle of Liukesong the 7th Regiment, the backbone of the main force of the Korean People's Revolutionary Army, again fought well. It was an invincible unit that could be called steel-like for its toughness. Its growth to be a-match-for-a-hundred unit should be attributed to O Jung Hup, the commander of the regiment. Because he was a loyal man and a famous officer, the 7th Regiment became a strong force.

I cannot forget O Jung Hup any more than I can forget Kim Hyok and Cha Kwang Su. O Jung Hup was my revolutionary comrade-in-arms and at the same time the man who many times saved my life.

His regiment was a bullet-proof wall, an impregnable fortress, in that it could be absolutely relied upon to defend the Headquarters of the Korean People's Revolutionary Army from the incessant attacks and provocations of the enemy.

After O Jung Hup was killed in action, I treasured and loved my men even more dearly. And I trained them to broaden their vision to the maximum and to behave prudently in battle to prevent as much loss as possible. Nevertheless, nothing I did could make up for the loss of O Jung Hup.

People say that it was I who transformed him into an excellent revolutionary, but they should not think this was the only reason.

We need to give deeper thought to transforming entire families along revolutionary lines, keeping O Jung Hup in mind as an example.

The family of O Thae Hui was considered to be first in the whole region of Jiandao, including Wangqing, as a patriotic and revolutionary family. Almost every member of this family took part in the anti-Japanese revolution. About 20 of them were killed while operating as underground workers or as soldiers of the People's Revolutionary Army. This figure alone shows how patriotic the members of the O family were.

O Jung Hup became such a stalwart fighter for the revolution mainly because in his boyhood he had received proper education from the senior members of his family.

Many young men from this family would grow to be tough revolutionaries, thanks to the painstaking efforts taken by their four seniors to steer them to the correct course in their life's journey. The four seniors–O Thae Hui, O Song Hui, O Chang Hui and O Jong Hui–were brothers.

The Os paid deep attention to the education of their offspring. They gave them effective moral education, which then served as a solid basis for the education in patriotism and the anti-Japanese revolutionary education they were to get later. Though living in poverty, the family attached great importance to the education of its children and made special effort to send them all to school.

Ten men from the family finished middle school, but none of them took to careerism or officialdom; they all became revolutionaries. Here O Jung Hwa played the greatest role, transforming the family into a revolutionary group with great efficiency. When we went to Wangqing after the expeditions to southern and northern Manchuria, all the young and middle-aged men and

women of the O family were already enlisted in revolutionary organizations.

O Jung Hup's family was the poorest of the Os, so they were revolutionized sooner. O Jung Hup was the first to transform himself into a revolutionary, and then his younger brothers and the rest of the family followed. O Jung Hup and his two younger brothers all fought as military or political cadres of regiments and battalions, and they all fell in battle.

When conducting small-unit operations in the area of Luozigou in the summer of 1941, I was in touch with O Chang Hui, O Jung Hup's father, and Pak Tok Sim, Pak Kil Song's father. In those days the Os were living in Luozigou. When I looked down at the Os' house from the mountain through binoculars, I could see them coming into the yard through the brushwood gate, carrying piles of firewood on A-frames. Even in Luozigou they lived like a family that had sent its children to the revolutionary army. At that time I had Kim Il form a secret organization of the guerrillas' families in Luozigou, with O Chang Hui and Pak Tok Sim at the centre.

When I advanced to the area northeast of Mt. Paektu during the days of small-unit operations, I received much help from O Chang Hui. With the old man's help I crossed the border and went to Kyongwon (the present-day Saeppyol) to form revolutionary organizations there.

The Os were truly a revolutionary family, one that should be recorded in the history books.

I often think how good it would be if O Jung Hup were still alive. If he had been here, many 7th Regiment-type units would have been produced in our country.

Comrade Kim Jong Il is now guiding the movement in the People's Army to emulate O Jung Hup. That is highly laudable.

In the past there were many people by my side as loyal as O Jung Hup. We must educate many people to be as loyal as O Jung Hup, so that they can help Comrade Kim Jong Il in his work.

Comrade Kim Jong Il is the future of Korea, for he is shouldering the destiny of the Korean revolution. In order for our motherland to achieve eternal prosperity, and for socialism in our country to win a continuous

victory. Comrade Kim Jong Il should remain healthy and the entire Party and army should support his leadership loyally. Officials must support him as the leader of the revolution and with a firm determination to carry out the revolutionary cause of Juche, pioneered in the forests of Mt. Paektu, they must achieve brilliant, continuous successes in all sectors of socialist construction down through the coming generations. They should also defend the Party Central Committee, the supreme headquarters of the Korean revolution, and Comrade Kim Jong Il with their very lives, just as O Jung Hup and his regiment defended Headquarters in the anti-Japanese struggle.

5. The Man from Phyongan Province

The eventful life of the respected leader Comrade Kim Il Sung saw a great many meetings and partings. He would take leave of a person he had met, sometimes to see him again, sometimes to lose all trace of him. In other cases, a person who expected to meet him would not see him because of unavoidable circumstances, and would never be heard of again until perhaps his death. This would invariably cause the leader great distress when he got the news.

In October 1993, while describing the large-unit circling operations to people who were studying the history of the anti-Japanese revolutionary struggle, the fatherly leader told them about a man from Phyongan Province he had met at Liukesong for just a few minutes. That day he said that he would write about the man in a separate section in volume 7 of the part, Anti-Japanese Revolution, of his reminiscences, *With the Century*. He added that he had formed strange relationships with many people during his revolutionary activities.

As I am reminded of the man from Phyongan Province, whom I met at Liukesong, I shall talk about him a little.

When we were on our way to camp after the memorial service for O Jung Hup, my orderly came to me and told me that a stranger had followed the unit from Liukesong, asking to see me.

During the anti-Japanese armed struggle I never sent away people who had come to see me without meeting them. However busy I was, I made time for them all. Meeting people from the enemy area or from the homeland was a delightful event in our life of guerrilla warfare.

Nevertheless, I did not feel like meeting any visitors that night because I was too full of grief and anger over the loss of O Jung Hup in the Battle of Liukesong. Worse still, I had also lost Choe Il Hyon and Kang Hung Sok. I did not feel like eating or talking. O Jung Hup was my right-hand man and his death left me in great mental shock.

Saying that I did not feel like meeting any one that night, I told my orderly to obtain the visitor's understanding and send him back.

The orderly was quite embarrassed. He said that although he had tried to reason with him several times, the visitor had insisted that he was a close acquaintance of General Kim Il Sung's and that he would like to see the General, even if it was for a minute to say hello.

Listening to the orderly, I felt it quite strange. I had no acquaintances in Liukesong, I was a stranger there.

My orderly took me to the visitor, a middle-aged man with a knapsack on his back. Though he had said he knew me well, I could not remember where I might have met him.

But as soon as he saw me, the man seized me by the hand and said, "It's me. The man from Phyongan Province."

Now I remembered.

One year, as my unit was marching through a forest, we came across a burned-down house in a remote valley. At the site of the house, still smoking, a middle-aged man carrying a boy on his back was sobbing bitterly.

After calming him down, I asked him what had happened.

The man explained that while he had been away cutting wood for fuel on the mountain a few hours ago, the enemy's "punitive" force had set fire to his house and shot his wife and children. He added that the boy on his back had escaped death only because he had climbed the mountain in search of his father.

When I heard his story I could not suppress my fury. I made up my mind to take revenge, and asked him how many enemy soldiers there had been and how long it was since they had left. He replied that they numbered about 40 and that it was only half an hour since they left.

I said to my men, "Look at what monsters the Japanese are! An innocent family murdered like this."

I asked them what they thought we should do. They answered that we should go after the Japanese to avenge the family. They then argued with each other as to who should have the chance to go.

I selected 50 agile men from the volunteers and sent them after the enemy. Our group annihilated the enemy just as they were setting up camp.

Before we left the burned-down house, I offered the man 50 *yuan*, saying, "To help you out we would like to build a new house for you, but I have only this money to give you. Go to some other place with this money and make a new life. Let's meet again when our motherland is liberated."

Fifty *yuan* was not a small sum. One could buy an ox with it. At that time one *mal* (7.5 kg) of millet cost only 30 *fen*.

The man said, "I lived in Phyongan Province in Korea in the past and came to West Jiandao, China, because I heard it was a good place to live. And now I'm faced with this disaster. I won't forget what I owe you, even in my grave. Will you please let me know your name before parting?"

He wanted to know my name so earnestly that my men told him. As I heard that he hailed from Phyongan Province, I felt even greater sympathy with him, for we were from the same province.

A considerable number of Koreans living in Manchuria came from Phyongan Province, but the majority lived in southern Manchuria. In Jiandao there were not many people from the province.

I once called on a family in West Jiandao who were from Phyongan Province. They offered me some tiny, pickled shrimps. I asked them where they had obtained pickled shrimps in Manchuria. The host replied that his daughter-in-law had been to her maiden home. That day I ate green maize with pickled shrimps with great relish. As I had spent my childhood in western Korea, I specially loved pickled shrimps.

After witnessing the tragedy of the man from Phyongan Province, who had lost the three members of his family in a single day, I could not repress my rage at the enemy. Though I had given him some money before parting from him, I did not feel light-hearted, and I left the place reluctantly as I thought about the grief and pain he was going through. I was worried about how he would live now, with a young son who would be pining for his mother. Though our hearts ached for him, we had to take leave of him.

The world seems wide, but it can also be small. I would never have

expected to see the man from Phyongan Province in the backwoods of Dunhua, a man I had met for only a few minutes in a nameless valley.

But for the loss of O Jung Hup, I would have been delighted by the encounter. As I was in bitter grief over the loss of my comrades-in-arms, however, I was not in a mood to greet the welcome visitor with joy.

Repressing my grief, I asked him how come he had appeared in Liukesong and why he wanted to see me at night.

He gave an account of his life after he had parted from us: he came to Liukesong with his son, got a job and took a second wife. He had managed to get along so far.

He continued, "It's thanks to you, General, that my son and I were able to remain alive. But for your 50 *yuan*, we might have become beggars and died of hunger. While working in the mountains, felling trees, I bought one *mal* of rice and have been looking forward earnestly to seeing you again. And I have prayed to God that you would visit this place."

The man was obviously fully aware of his obligations to his fellow man and never forgot what he owed others.

From the one *mal* of rice I could sense people's warm love for our revolutionary army and the purity of their devotion and obligation. I also resolved to pull myself together and face up to my grief with courage. For the sake of people like this man, I would take revenge on the enemy a hundredfold, even a thousandfold.

That night I could not talk with him for very long. We were in a hurry, and the man also told me he was not in a position to hang around. He left us, shedding tears, and I, too, saw him off with a heavy heart.

I did not hear from him again until after the country was liberated. Immediately after liberation, I met him in Sinuiju. This would probably be in November 1945, since it was at a time when a student unrest had taken place in Sinuiju.

The student unrest broke out in Tong Middle School. The students, spurred on by reactionaries, raided the building of the Provincial Party Committee. There was no knowing how the incident would develop unless it

was brought under control in time. Local authorities said only Kim Il Sung could save the situation, so I went to Sinuiju by plane.

Tong Middle School had produced many patriots. The Rev. Hong Tong Gun had probably studied in this school. But the students here had been mostly under the influence of nationalist ideology in the days before liberation. Filled with anti-communist ideas against a background of wrongdoings by sham communists, these students flared up and raided the building of the Provincial Party Committee.

In Sinuiju I gathered the people and students in the playground of the middle school and made a speech. Listening to my speech, the students realized that they had foolishly played into the hands of the reactionaries and that to oppose the Communist Party would harm both the building of a new country and the unity of the nation. After this, they never again caused an unrest.

When I was about to go back to my quarters after the speech, the man from Phyongan Province whom I had taken leave of in Liukesong came up to me suddenly. He told me he had attended the mass rally that day. We hugged each other delightedly like old friends in front of many people. I introduced him to the cadres who accompanied me, explaining that I had seen him after the Battle of Liukesong and how I had got acquainted with him.

A man who does good things makes friends with good people, and after parting from them, he is bound to see them again.

The ancient people often talked of “three beneficial friends” and “three harmful friends”. By the former they meant honest, reliable and learned friends whose company is highly beneficial. By the latter they meant eccentric, talkative, good-natured but fainthearted people who should be avoided.

As this is a saying of the ancient, we cannot say it is perfectly right, but it does define helpful friends and harmful friends with relative accuracy.

I am afraid if you might think I’m going too far in defining a man I met only for a short while on a march according to one of these two categories.

Nevertheless, the man was without doubt a good and reliable man. This kind of person always does good. You can easily see that he is an honest and trustworthy man from the mere fact that he came to see me, bringing rice,

when he heard that I was in Liukesong. I don't know how learned he was. Since he lived in the remote mountains, how much knowledge would he have had, if any? Anyhow he was a good man who could be placed in the category of the "three beneficial friends". People who value obligation, who do not forget even small debts and who return human feeling with human feeling are all good people.

I told the man that now the country was liberated we could see each other as we pleased. I asked him to come to see me any time and to consider me his old friend. Strangely enough, we again had to part in haste; I was busy, and the man did not try to take up my time. I met the man three times in unusual circumstances and parted in haste each time, so I failed to ask him for his name and home town.

In the last few months of 1945 every Korean was elated by the country's liberation and as busy as never before in his life. I was also very busy with the work of nation-building. This being the situation, I failed to have a long talk with him, the man with whom I had formed such an extraordinary relationship. Looking back on it now, I feel sorry.

The little boy who had been on his back when he was weeping over the loss of his wife and children and home–if he is still alive, he must be over 60 by now. How good it would have been if I had found out his name!

I don't know why the man did not come to see me since parting with me in Sinuiju. There were many casualties in Sinuiju during the war, because of the US air raids. If he continued to live there, he might have been killed by the bombing.

How many people submitted their recollections to you about the Battle of Liukesong? Isn't there a man among them who might be the man from Phyongan Province? I truly regret that I did not meet him again before the war.

There is no knowing how long he lived, but he must have done many things helpful to the country in his lifetime.

As I said before, meeting people is the greatest pleasure for me, as pleasant as going out among them. Throughout the 80 years of my life I have encountered many people. It is most agreeable to call up in my memory the

people I got to know in my youth and to picture each of them in my mind.

I am still disappointed that I have failed to see all those whom I wanted to see. I most bitterly regret not having met all the good people who helped me and supported me in the most trying days. I don't even know if some of them are still alive.

My heart aches whenever I think of the people whom I promised to meet again, but in the end failed after all to meet. Among these is Kim Chi Bom, a peasant.

Kim Chi born lived near Seoul in the days before liberation. In August 1950 he came to Pyongyang as a member of a people's visiting group of workers, peasants, youth and intellectuals in Seoul and Kyonggi Province. On August 15, on the fifth anniversary of the country's liberation, I received this group, numbering one hundred or more, in the Cabinet office. While talking with them I heard that one member of the group had disappeared somewhere during an enemy air raid and had not turned up so far. This was Kim Chi Bom.

I asked them about him. They told me he was a patriot and that he had maintained relations with the political workers of the KPRA who infiltrated into the Seoul area in 1943, rendering them a great deal of material and moral assistance. According to them, he had set all his family on the road to national salvation, even after liberation. His son had been sentenced to death for fighting against the Syngman Rhee regime.

Their description made me wish I could meet him. The other visitors were quite sorry that he was not there to see me.

I prolonged the time of our talk, waiting for his arrival with patience, but he did not appear.

Where was he during that time then? I learned later that while roaming about in search of the group, he had come across a kindergarten building crushed by enemy bombing and had stopped to rescue a wounded child from the rubble and take it to hospital. After hearing this, I thought that I had to see him however busy I was. I couldn't get to sleep thinking about how sorry he would be if he failed to meet me.

I had been told that the group was going to Mangyongdae next day, so I

arranged time to go there myself just to greet the man together with my grandfather. Since my grandfather and Kim Chi Bom were both peasants, they could have a good understanding of each other, I thought.

Next morning I went to Mangyongdae with a gift for Kim.

Laying aside everything, I waited for him in my old home with my grandfather. But on that day, too, Kim failed to appear at the appointed time; I asked my grandfather to welcome the man in my place, then returned to my office in Cabinet.

He failed to arrive on time that morning because, as luck would have it, his group had been caught in an enemy air raid near Phaltong Bridge.

As I had requested, my grandfather met him and handed my gift over to him.

After sightseeing in Pyongyang, Kim returned to Seoul and supported our battle front with great enthusiasm. All his family carried goods and ammunition to the front for us. They also nursed the wounded soldiers of the Korean People's Army.

I don't know what happened to him later on. He was around 60 years old when he was in Pyongyang as a member of the visiting group, so if he is still alive he must be well over 100 by now.

Had it not been for the urgent matters that demanded my attention at that time, I could have met him. The fact that I didn't still rankles my mind. It was fortunate that my grandfather met him in my place. Otherwise, it would really have been disappointing.

"A man who does good things makes friends with good people"–this is a good saying. In order to make friends with excellent people, one must do many good things oneself. A man who fails to do good for his country and collective, for his comrades and neighbours, will fail to have good friends.

The man from Phyongan Province is a friend I made in the course of fighting for the freedom and happiness of the people. I definitely consider him a friend. Still vivid before my mind's eye are my images of him, weeping in despair in the yard of his destroyed home with his son on his back, and later in Liukesong, when he came to see me, carrying a knapsack full of rice on his back.

6. “Let Us Defend the Soviet Union with Arms!”

The Soviet Union, which had established a people’s government for workers and peasants, the first of its kind in the world, and had eradicated the exploitation of man by man, was an ideal society for humanity heading for socialism and social progress.

In the past, communists and revolutionary people throughout the world gave their selfless support to the struggle to defend these ideals and this land. The red flag of the Soviet Union bearing the emblem of the hammer and sickle was permeated with the warm blood of the heroic Soviet people and that of internationalist fighters everywhere.

Each time the Soviet Union was faced with a military threat, the soldiers of the Korean People’s Revolutionary Army dealt hard blows at the Japanese imperialists from behind the lines under the slogan of “Let us defend the Soviet Union with arms!” Quite a few of our men fell in battle to check the Japanese advance on the Soviet Union.

The great leader recollected the days when the KPRA was defending the Soviet Union with arms.

Communists must have a correct understanding of the relationship between national revolution and world revolution. In the past some people argued that for communists to be concerned with their national revolution was contrary to the principles of Marxism, while others contended that for Korean patriots to talk of the Soviet revolution or world revolution before achieving Korean independence was a form of treachery. Such Leftist and Rightist interpretations of the relationship between national revolution and world revolution caused a fair amount of ideological confusion and antagonism at one time in the revolutionary movement in our country.

When we created the slogan “Let us defend the Soviet Union with arms!” during our armed struggle against the Japanese, a number of people did not

welcome it. They said that it would give the nationalists an excuse to speak ill of the communists. Propaganda by Japanese imperialists and their lackeys often warned Koreans against falling "victim to the Soviet Union" or becoming "Stalin's scapegoats".

When we suggested fighting in support of the Soviet Union, people who had no true idea of internationalism considered it to be a futile sacrifice.

We fought in support of the Soviet people at the cost of our blood and in spite of our own arduous revolution under the slogan of "Let us defend the Soviet Union with arms!" simply because the situation at the time required it. In those days the Soviet Union was in complete isolation, encircled as it was by the imperialists on all sides.

For all communists to defend the Soviet Union was under the circumstances essential to the interests of the revolution, as well as a moral necessity. From the outset of our armed struggle against the Japanese, therefore, we strongly supported and defended the Soviet Union under the banner of proletarian internationalism.

It was not only the 1930s that witnessed the Korean struggle to support and defend the Soviet Union; the support was there even in the 1920s.

Hong Pom Do was not a communist in his early years, but he did not reject the communist movement. Even though he had started his patriotic activities with the nationalist movement in Korea, he did not confine his activities to this movement alone, nor did he consider the nationalist movement as absolute.

After the March First Popular Uprising (in 1919–Tr.), many of the Korean independence campaigners crossed into Soviet Russia, took up arms and fought there. In the Russian civil war they fought in the Red Army and the Far East guerrilla army, shedding their blood to safeguard the Soviet government. Hong Pom Do was one of these fighters. He distinguished himself in the war and even met Lenin.

In the early 1920s the Japanese imperialists carried out ceaseless armed intervention in the Russian Far East in support of the White army. At that time a Communist Party organization in the Russian Far East requested

support from Hong Pom Do, who was active in Russia's Maritime Territory. On hearing this, some high-ranking officers of the Independence Army declared that it was foolish for Koreans to shed blood for others when they were unable to solve their own problems. Hong Pom Do, however, was willing to help the Red Army even if it meant shedding Korean blood; he said that any army fighting against the Japanese was his friend.

Of all the battles Hong Pom Do fought, the most famous was the Battle of Iman on the Ussuri River. His Independence Army fought so courageously in that battle that after it was over, the Japanese and the White armies were said to have trembled and run away at the mere sound of Korean words of command.

A long time ago the Soviet people set up a monument to the soldiers who fell in the Battle of Iman.

This fact alone shows the long history of the ties between the Korean and Soviet peoples in their joint struggle.

Hong Pom Do said to his men: "The Soviet Union is the first proletarian republic in the world, so we must both help her and be helped by her. Fighting single-handed, she must be plagued with a host of difficulties. Let us help her sincerely." How thoughtful he was, compared to those who boasted of their knowledge about the world.

Judging from the movements of the Kwantung Army, which was standing face to face with the Red Army on the Soviet-Manchurian border, we could see clearly how frantic the imperialists were in their attempts to stifle the Soviet Union in those days. From 1932 to 1939 the Japanese imperialists provoked nearly 1,000 border clashes, big and small, including the well-known incident of Lake Khasan and Khalkhin-Gol. This meant that they provoked an armed conflict every few days. Not a single day passed without gun-smoke rising somewhere on the Soviet-Manchurian border.

The hostile relations between the Soviet Union and Japan had historical roots. As is widely known, Russia and Japan had a war between 1904 and 1905, with the result that Russia lost many concessions and a wide territory to Japan.

After the October Revolution the imperialist powers, particularly Japan, launched armed interventions against the new Soviet Republic. Japan sent its

army to Siberia for overt armed intervention in support of the Whites.

I have been told that the most vicious and atrocious among the imperialist armies to invade Soviet Russia was the Japanese army. The Japanese aggressors soaked the Maritime Territory in blood. It was around that time that the Japanese army captured Lazo, commander of a guerrilla army, and killed him by throwing him into the furnace of a locomotive. Even after the armies of the United States, Britain and France had been driven out by the Red Army, the Japanese army continued its atrocities, bringing in reinforcements. Since their triumph over Russia and the Chinese Qing Dynasty in previous wars, the Japanese imperialists had become infected with megalomania. So elated were they with their success, they convinced themselves that there was no country and no army equal to theirs. Whenever a major international dispute broke out, the Japanese imperialists came sniffing around to bite off what they could.

Antagonism between the Soviet Union and Japan came to the surface with the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War in 1937. When Japan provoked the July 7 incident, the Soviet Union supported China, and from that moment on the Soviet-Japanese relations went downhill. In August 1937, the Soviet Union signed a non-aggression pact with China. It then closed some offices of its consulate in the area under the jurisdiction of Japan and demanded that Japan do the same. With the passage of time tensions between the Soviet Union and Japan mounted.

To make matters worse, in January 1938 the Japanese authorities detained a Soviet plane that had made an emergency landing in Manchuria, and this incident strained the Soviet-Japanese relations even further. It was easy to see that the antagonism and tension between them could lead to a local conflict, or even all-out war.

At their “five ministers’ meeting” in August 1936, the Japanese adopted a state policy of aggression against the Soviet Union. The meeting confirmed their plan for war against the Soviet Union, in which they would reinforce their armies in Manchuria and Korea so as to annihilate the Soviet armed forces in the Far East at the very outset of the conflict. On the eve of the

Second World War Nazi Germany planned what they called their "Barbarossa" operation against the Soviet Union, whereas the Japanese military actually anticipated Germany by planning their "Otsu" operation first. Japan was one step ahead of Germany in wanting to get its hands on the Soviet Union, so to speak.

In Japan's *Programme for the Settlement of Border Disputes Between Manchuria and the Soviet Union*, Ueda, the commander of the Kwantung Army, instructed that in areas where the line marking the boundary was not clear, the field commander should define the boundary line on his own, and that if clashes occurred, he should ensure unconditional victory regardless of troop strength or existing boundaries. The Soviet Union was in imminent danger of being forced into an all-out war by Japan's reckless armed provocations on the border.

Such brigandage on the part of the Japanese against the USSR infuriated us. Our determination to support the Soviet Union by force of arms was a manifestation of comradeship quite natural to the Korean communists, who had been fighting bloody battles almost daily against the Kwantung army.

To us, who were fighting for socialism, the Soviet Union with its worker-peasant government was literally a paradise. We found it a marvel that a society existed in which parasitic oppressors and exploiters had been overthrown. We therefore resolved to help protect the Soviet Union even if it meant shedding our own blood.

Just as they had sown discord between the Korean and Chinese people, the Japanese imperialists now pursued the policy of driving a wedge between the Korean and Soviet people. At one point they formed a border-guard company, made up mainly of young pro-Japanese Koreans from Hunchun, and posted it in the border area between the Soviet Union and Manchuria as a way of pitting it against the Soviet people. They even saw to it that a bonus in the name of the Manchukuo military governor was given to the soldiers of that company.

Meanwhile, the Japanese imperialists unleashed a rumour that they had trained many secret agents from among the Korean residents in Jiandao and smuggled them into the Soviet Union. This had a very poisonous effect in

that it made the Soviet people hate Koreans and give a wide berth to them.

When we were operating in the guerrilla zone at Xiaowangqing, some comrades from the Hunchun regiment told me that such wedge-driving moves by the Japanese imperialists greatly aggravated the relations between their regiment and the Soviet border guard. They said that one company commander, unaware of the change in the attitude of the Soviet people towards Koreans, had tried to contact the Soviets according to the former procedure, only to be nearly arrested by them.

In the summer of 1938, rumour had it that a high-ranking official in the Soviet Far East Home Affairs Commissariat had defected to Japan, via Hunchun.

In the middle of the 1930s measures were taken to move the Korean residents in the Soviet Far East to Central Asia en masse. The Soviets explained that the collective emigration of Koreans from the eastern areas to either Kazakhstan or Uzbekistan was a measure that was necessary for their own safety and defence, but the Korean people did not welcome it.

At the news, I also felt our ruined nation's sorrow to the very marrow of my bones.

Nevertheless, we continued to hold high the banner of defence of the Soviet Union for the sake of the greater cause.

All the battles we fought in the Soviet-Manchurian border areas were carried out on our own initiative to assist the Soviet Union, even though we knew that these battles were tactically disadvantageous to us.

In those days we had neither signed a treaty of military cooperation with the Soviet Union, nor had we been requested by the Soviet Union for assistance, as Hong Pom Do's unit had been. All those military actions were decided by us on our own, motivated by our comradely feeling for the Soviet Union and our hatred for the common enemy, Japanese imperialism.

A good illustration of our soldiers' enthusiasm for defending the Soviet Union can be seen in their efforts in the winter of 1934 to rescue a Soviet pilot whose aircraft had been swept away in a gale during training and had crash-landed in Hulin, Manchuria.

Pak Kwang Son played a leading role in the rescue operation. Right at that time he was working not far from Hulin with Yu Yang's Chinese anti-Japanese army unit as an operative from the liaison office of the Anti-Japanese People's Guerrilla Army. The day the Soviet plane crashed on the shore of the Ussuri River, more than 50 stout young Koreans had just joined Yu Yang's unit. It was an eventful day, I was told.

As soon as he witnessed the crash, Pak Kwang Son dashed into the liaison office and appealed to his comrades-in-arms to rescue the Soviet pilot. In the meantime the Japanese were swarming to capture the pilot as well.

The small force of guerrillas fought a life-and-death battle against 100-odd enemy troops who were firing machine-guns and even small-calibre artillery pieces. The soldiers of Yu Yang's unit, who had been on their way to attack an enemy convoy, joined the guerrillas in the battle.

The Soviet pilot was standing by his plane helplessly, unable to distinguish friend from foe. Pak Kwang Son shouted at him in Korean to come on over quickly and not be afraid, but the pilot, not comprehending, fired his pistol at the guerrillas instead, taking them for the enemy.

To Pak Kwang Son's relief the perplexing situation was straightened out by a Korean who had been working with the Chinese soldiers of Yu Yang's anti-Japanese unit. The man shouted to the pilot in fluent Russian to come towards them, saying they were the revolutionary army.

Only then did the Soviet pilot begin to crawl towards them to be rescued.

The efforts of the guerrillas to ensure the safety of the Soviet pilot and to bring him back to health were valiant indeed. In those days they themselves were nearly starving for want of even maize gruel. However, for the Soviet pilot they attacked the enemy's convoy and obtained flour, with which they made bread for him, and hunted wild boar to provide him with meat. And in the midst of the cold winter they went fishing in the Ussuri, breaking the ice.

The pilot, badly bruised and having narrowly escaped the disgrace of being taken captive, returned safely to his country under the escort of our guerrillas.

The rescue operation was later used frequently in the education of

People's Revolutionary Army units as a good example of internationalism.

In the summer of 1938 the Japanese imperialists provoked an incident at Lake Khasan. That incident, which was also called the Zhanggufeng incident, was one of the largest and most shameless of the border disputes started by the Japanese imperialists up to that time.

Zhanggufeng is a low Soviet hill on the opposite side of the Tuman River across the then Sahoe-ri, Unggi County in Korea. The Soviets called it a nameless height. In its vicinity is Lake Khasan. Terms such as the Lake Khasan incident or the Zhanggufeng incident are all derived from geographical names.

At first the Japanese imperialists claimed that Lake Khasan belonged in their territory, but as their claim did not get by, they attacked the Soviet border guard post on Zhanggufeng. Their aim was to occupy Zhanggufeng and then reinforce their troops to control the area of the Maritime Territory south of Vladivostok.

After seizing the Soviet guard post, the Japanese army massed a large force, mainly from the 19th Division in Ranam, in that area. The Soviet side, mobilizing huge forces, beat back the Japanese invaders and drove them out.

At the time of the Lake Khasan incident, we struck the enemy from behind in Linjiang.

The Japanese military were very nervous about the People's Revolutionary Army, which attacked them in the rear each time they carried out armed provocations against the Soviet Union and China. Their failure to wipe out the anti-Japanese guerrilla army, which they called a cancer in their rule, was an acute headache for Japanese politicians and military.

It was in Linjiang County that we held a meeting of military and political cadres and adopted the policy on attacking the enemy from behind to help defend the Soviet Union. All the officers and men of the People's Revolutionary Army actively supported and carried out this policy. The people also supported the struggle of the revolutionary army.

While the KPRA set off military operations against the Japanese in defence of the Soviet

Union, patriotic people in the homeland also launched a vigorous resistance struggle.

This is confirmed by the following fact:

"According to *The Current Situation of Public Peace and Order in Korea*, published by the police affairs bureau of the Government-General of Korea, over 150 stevedores at Chongjin Port went on strike on the night of August 2 in protest against the Japanese imperialist aggression on Khasan, and many of the strikers joined the guerrilla army." (*The Korean People in the Struggle for Independence and Democracy*, the Soviet Academy of Sciences Publishing House)

Subsequent to the Lake Khasan incident, the Soviet Union and Japan signed an armistice agreement. The attitude the Soviet Union took towards Japan in dealing with the incident was very hard.

The Japanese military was scared at the tough stand of the Soviet Union. The USSR was no longer the incompetent Russia of the Russo-Japanese War, but a formidable major power. The Japanese imperialists had to regard the Soviet Union in a new light and ponder over the plan of aggression they had so persistently pursued.

The Japanese imperialists, however, did not abandon their aggressive ambitions in regard to the Soviet Union. In order to test once more the hard-line policy of the Soviet Union, they prepared a new armed provocation on the Manchurian-Mongolian border. In this context, the Khalkhin-Gol incident, the so-called Nomonhan incident, broke out. Khalkhin-Gol is the name of a river in Mongolia near the Soviet-Mongolian border. I've been told *nomonhan* means "peace" in Mongolian.

The aim of the Japanese imperialists in setting off the Khalkhin-Gol incident was to occupy the Mongolian territory east of the river, create a defence zone from which to protect a second railway they were going to construct, and cut off the trunk line of the Siberian railway in order to bite off the Soviet Far East from Russia.

They also wanted to test the Soviet attitude towards a Japanese invasion and its strategy against Japan and its military power. At that time no details about the Soviet military power were known. Much was shrouded in mystery.

Around that time quite a few high-ranking Soviet military commanders

were being removed from the battle lines, and Japan was watching the development with interest, for it was keen to know how such a change would affect Soviet military power.

As is generally known, Japan's political and military circles were long divided on the issue of northward versus southward expansion. They were having a hot debate on the strategic issue on whether they should attack the Soviet Union first, or occupy the southern regions first.

Their armed provocation at Khalkhin-Gol was a kind of test battle to examine the possibility of their northward advance.

The Khalkhin-Gol area is a vast expanse of sand dunes and grassland. The Khalkhin-Gol incident was deliberately provoked by the Japanese, who made the absurd charge that the Mongolian border guard had violated the border. The absurdity of the incident lies in the fact that this local war was directly brought on by a flock of sheep grazing on the grassland in Khalkhin-Gol! Do cattle or sheep know anything about borders or military off-limits zones? Yet the Japanese sent out Manchukuo police to search and arrest Mongolians on the preposterous charge of border transgression by a flock of sheep. They seized this opportunity to set off the Khalkhin-Gol incident.

Already in 1935, the Japanese imperialists had forged a map on which they had drawn the borderline of Manchukuo over 20 km deep into Mongolia.

That Japan was preparing such a large-scale armed provocation as the Khalkhin-Gol incident beforehand is clearly shown by the fact that one of the Japanese masterminds of that incident was General Komatsubara, who had previously been the military attache at the Japanese embassy in Moscow.

Because of his finesse in anti-Soviet plotting, Komatsubara had become the commander of the division deployed in Hailaer, the area that could be said to be the forefront in Japanese anti-Soviet operations. At the outset of the incident he manoeuvred his division deep into Mongolian territory, occupying a wide area west of Khalkhin-Gol and making it the bridgehead of the Japanese army. The Mongolian force disposed in that area was quite small, and the Soviet army was stationed 100 km away. Komatsubara took advantage of this weak point.

The Soviet-Mongolian allied army, however, hit back at Komatsubara's division and other large enemy forces, driving them to the point of annihilation.

The Japanese imperialists regrouped by bringing reinforcements from their mainland and launched a new operation.

The Soviet side dispatched Zhukov, the deputy commander of the Belorussian military district, to the Khalkhin-Gol front. He annihilated the numerically superior Japanese forces by employing mainly armoured divisions and air strikes, using high mobility and surprise as tactics.

The local hostilities in Khalkhin-Gol ended in mid-September that year (1939–Tr.) with the victory of the Soviet-Mongolian forces. While their allied forces were engaged in heavy fighting in Khalkhin-Gol, we ordered the Korean People's Revolutionary Army to launch harassment operations in their support behind the enemy lines.

According to my orders, in the summer of that year all the KPRA units fought numerous battles and made great contributions to checking the Japanese invasion of the Soviet Union.

Typical of these was the battle we fought at Dashahe-Dajianggang in August 1939.

The Dashahe-Dajianggang battle was fought in accordance with our plan to carry out harassment operations at a time when the enemy was busy moving troops and supplies for the formation of its 6th Corps, which was to be committed to Khalkhin-Gol. The battle lasted two days and destroyed 500 enemy troops.

At the Battle of Dashahe, Kim Jin blocked an enemy pillbox with his body to open up the way for his unit to charge.

The example set by Kim Jin was emulated by many soldiers of the Korean People's Army during the Great Fatherland Liberation War, when they silenced enemy guns by blocking them with their bodies.

Kim Jin had joined the army at Badaohezi, Ningan County, on our second expedition to northern Manchuria. When we entered the village of Badaohezi, O Jin U brought along a young farmhand by name of Kim Jin

who had volunteered for the revolutionary army with such eagerness that we accepted him.

Comrade O Jin U knew Kim Jin well, for he was the latter's platoon leader.

Kim Jin had studied at the village school for only a few days, but after his enlistment he continued learning with the help of his comrades-in-arms. I took him along with me for a while, teaching him how to read and write. He was a simple young man who rendered an enormous service to our revolution and died a heroic death.

It is necessary to give wide publicity to a man like Kim Jin among the younger generation.

I think it is very significant that the hero who blocked an enemy pillbox with his body was produced in the fighting in support of the Soviet Union at the tough Battle of Khalkhin-Gol.

Also, I'll never forget the woman fighter Ho Song Suk who fell in our harassment operations to assist the Soviet Union in that battle.

Having broken with her father, who was the chief of a Self-Defence Corps, Ho Song Suk came to the guerrilla zone alone in her teens and joined the revolutionary army. She told me she had been tormented by the thought of her father working as the chief of the Self-Defence Corps and had asked him several times a day to give up his job. Her imploring had had no effect upon her bigoted father, however.

Unable to dissuade him, Ho Song Suk had left home for the guerrilla zone in Sandaowan. That was in 1933, so she was probably about sixteen or seventeen at the time. I heard of her arrival only some years later.

I thought, however, that whatever her reasons, her turning against her father had to be reconsidered.

When I met her in connection with a women's company that needed to be organized, I reproached her lightly, saying, "You must first correct your attitude to your father. If your father is the chief of the Self-Defence Corps, you must patiently dissuade him from traitorous acts and help him. I think it's rather unreasonable of you to be hostile to your father." But she waved her

hand in dismissal, saying I should not broach the subject of her father.

So I told her: “Even if your father has become a pro-Japanese element, you must not take this attitude towards him. Before accusing him you must think of how to bring him around to the revolution. If you turn your back on him and push him over to the enemy’s side, what will become of him? How much can you do for the revolution if you are an undutiful daughter who cannot even reform her own father? Before long we are going to organize a women’s company; if you don’t change your attitude towards your father, we will not admit you into the company.”

Only then did she confess in a tearful voice that she had not acquitted herself well and that she would do her best to persuade her father to change if she had the chance. She begged in earnest to be admitted into the women’s company. Later she fought well in this company, being so brave in battles that her comrades-in-arms called her “General Ho” or “woman general”.

On the evening of the day we fought the Battle of Jiansanfeng, I met Choe Hyon and told him to grant Ho Song Suk permission to visit her home for a few days in order to help her to reconcile herself with her father. Choe Hyon agreed readily. He promised me that he would send her to her father without fail once his unit arrived in the neighbourhood of Mingyuegou.

Ho Song Suk, however, never did meet her father again. She was preparing to visit him just as other preparations were being made to fight the battle at Dashahe-Dajianggang in support of the Soviet Union at Khalkhin-Gol. She decided to postpone her home visit, saying she could not put her private affairs first at a time when operations to defend the Soviet Union were about to start.

On the day of the battle at Dashahe-Dajianggang, she unexpectedly encountered at her sentry post a convoy of enemy trucks. It was not her turn to stand guard that day, but she went to relieve an older veteran on duty so he could go and eat. Seeing several trucks full of Japanese troops approaching the sentry post, she told the veteran to hurry off and report the situation to Headquarters. She then took on the enemy single-handed.

She opened fire, exposing herself to delay the enemy even for a few minutes. Naturally, the Japanese concentrated their fire on her.

She got hit in several places, but she hurled all her grenades at the enemy before she fell. Thanks to her heroic deed, her unit averted a possible disaster and was able to move to the battlefield in time.

She was probably about 22 or 23 years old when she died. How many dreams she must have dreamed at her age! She gave up her dreams and her youth to the fight in support of the Soviet Union in the Battle of Khalkhin-Gol. She was true flower of internationalism.

The regimental commander Jon Tong Gyu and the regimental political commissar Ryang Hyong U also died in the battle at Dashahe-Dajianggang. They were young men with long futures ahead of them, both of them from Hunchun. They had been highly respected and eagerly followed by their men, for they were officers of noble personality and high qualifications, always setting a good example to others.

Ryang Hyong U had fought at the Hunchun guerrilla army from its inception. In his last battle, his unit had a mission to attack Dashahe first and then occupy a height near Xiaoshahe to contain the advance of the enemy. However, the Battle of Dashahe dragged out so long that his unit failed to occupy the height and the enemy was able to hang on to it. Yet the outcome of the entire battle depended upon the seizure of the height. At that critical juncture Ryang Hyong U seized a machine-gun and led the charge at the head of the attacking formation. The height was very nearly theirs when Ryang Hyong U was shot in the belly.

Pressing down his wound with his left hand, he fired his machine-gun at the enemy with his other hand, shouting, “The Japs are the sworn enemy of our Korean people! Now they’re invading the Soviet Union! Destroy the enemy to the last man! Let’s defend the Soviet Union with our blood!” The soldiers stormed up the hill in angry waves and occupied the height in a minute.

The regimental commander Jon Tong Gyu, who had fought shoulder to shoulder with Ryang Hyong U from their days in Hunchun, also died a heroic death after annihilating many enemy troops.

The guerrillas who fell in the Battle of Dashahe-Dajianggang are all internationalist martyrs who were loyal to the revolutionary cause.

The Battle of Yaocha was also fought by the People's Revolutionary Army at the risk of their lives in order to help the Soviet Union. The new regimental commander Ri Ryong Un commanded the battle in which he and his men killed hundreds of enemy soldiers. In the battle Ri was shot in the chest, but fortunately the wound was not fatal. After the Xiaohaerbaling meeting, however, he fell in small-unit action in the Soviet-Manchurian border area, fought in cooperation with the Comintern. His small-unit actions were also motivated by internationalism.

The People's Revolutionary Army fought many other harassment battles behind enemy lines in support of the Soviet Union at the time of the Khalkhin-Gol incident, among them a raid on the police barracks in a gold mine in Sandaogou, Helong County, an attack on Fuerhe, Antu County, and an assault on Baicaogou, Wangqing County.

How annoyed the enemy were by the harassment of the People's Revolutionary Army was illustrated by the fact that they had cut down all the trees and undergrowth within a range of 100 to 200 metres at the sides of all the roads and railways leading to the Soviet-Manchurian border. Nevertheless they were unable to check ambushes and raids by the People's Revolutionary Army. Because of the daring and brisk activities of our fighters, explosions and derailments of military trains took place constantly on the railways in the Soviet-Manchurian border area.

Through their successive attacks in the enemy rear, the People's Revolutionary Army not only wiped out large numbers of enemy troops but also pinned down large enemy forces within the area of their operations, thus preventing the enemy from throwing their full force against the Soviet Union. At the time of the Lake Khasan incident, the enemy had deployed two brigades to Jiandao alone just to check our force. I've been told that in the Khalkhin-Gol incident they were forced to keep large forces in their rear.

As you can see, our harassment of the enemy in the rear under the slogan "Let us defend the Soviet Union with arms!" played an important role in frustrating the Japanese imperialist aggression against the Soviet Union.

To make an all-out effort to provide protective cover for the attacking

elements of the dispersed, advancing formation is a basic principle of military science. From the point of view of the communists, the Soviet Union, the one and only socialist state in the world at that time, could be compared to a soldier charging at the head of the line of advancing formation. The Korean communists struck the Kwantung Army from behind to support both the Soviet Union that was leading the international communist movement.

To do one's utmost to maintain and defend a revolution that has emerged victorious and to preserve and consolidate revolutionary achievements is the internationalist duty of communists as well as their moral obligation. Only when active assistance is rendered to the advanced revolution can the backward revolution advance successfully in tandem with the former. For this reason, the international cooperation of the communists must be aimed at helping, supporting and complementing each other.

The Battle of Khalkhin-Gol ended in the disastrous defeat of the Kwantung Army. The number of casualties, captives and missing amounted to 50,000 troops. The warmongers got what they deserved. I heard later that the Japanese officers who had lost all their men either voluntarily set fire to their colours and committed suicide, or were forced to kill themselves by their superiors. The top-level executives of the Kwantung Army, including Commander Ueda, the chief of staff, chief of operations and operations officers were all dismissed from their posts before the cease-fire agreement was signed.

After suffering this bitter experience in the Battle of Khalkhin-Gol, the Japanese imperialists changed their attitude towards the Soviet Union. They shifted from their former high-handed policy to one of temporary appeasement.

Some people may raise the following questions: Was it right for the Korean communists to have assisted and defended the Soviet Union at the cost of their own blood during the anti-Japanese war? In the light of today's reality, in which socialism has collapsed and capitalism revived in the Soviet Union, was the internationalist assistance of the Korean communists an exercise in futility?

In fact, there is no need to argue about these matters. Few of our people

will raise such questions or argue about them. Only those who have abandoned their faith will do this.

We have never considered the internationalist assistance of the Korean communists to the Soviet Union from a nihilistic point of view. Although the Soviet Union has disintegrated, the help we extended to their revolutionary struggle in the past was not futile. Loyalty to one's duty and efforts made on behalf of justice will never be futile.

We regard the setback faced by socialism in the Soviet Union as a temporary phenomenon. Socialism is a human ideal, an inevitable course of historical development, and therefore it is perfectly clear that socialism will rise again in the end. Socialism is justice, not injustice. And since socialism stands for justice, the assistance given to its first embodiment, the Soviet Union, is itself a just and sacred act. Such an act can never be futile.

We are still immensely proud that we helped the Soviet people with arms and at the cost of our own blood when they were in difficulties.

The name "Soviet Union" no longer exists and the veteran revolutionaries who created the Soviet state are all dead. Not many of the soldiers who took part in the Battle of Khalkhin-Gol are still alive in Russia, and few people can recall our harassment operations against the enemy in support of the Soviet Union.

But even if no one remembers us, the painstaking efforts we made to tend the flower garden of internationalism was not in vain.

Whether anybody recognized it or not, we gave armed assistance to the Soviet Union in the past, and this was both for the sake of the Soviet Union and at the same time for our own sake. The Soviet people answered the Korean communists' internationalist deeds with their own internationalist deeds.

Most countries are now acting in their own selfish national interests. Many people seem to be completely self-centred, not caring a straw as to whether others are happy or unhappy. I object to both individual and national selfishness. What human worth is there in a purely egocentric existence? To my mind, the greatest pleasure in the life of any human being is in helping others.

7. The End of the “Maeda Punitive Force”

The Battle of Hongqihe, fought in March 1940, was one of the highlights of the last days of the large-unit circling operations.

The enemy, who constantly boasted that it would annihilate the revolutionary army through the “special clean-up campaign for maintaining public peace in the southeastern area”, suffered a telling blow in that battle. The tragic end of one entire company in its “punitive” force threw the enemy into total confusion.

What was the world situation at that time? The Sino-Japanese War had entered the stage of drawn-out, pitched battles and the Soviet-Japanese relations had become extremely strained owing to the Lake Khasan and Khalkhin-Gol incidents. The flames of the Second World War were spreading far and wide.

At this point the top brass of the Kwantung Army launched its “special clean-up campaign”, claiming that it would put an end to the anti-Japanese movement in Northeast China once and for all.

As we used to vanish after each of our attacks, the enemy trekked about the backwoods of Fusong and Dunhua in search of us all through the winter. While the enemy was going around claiming that the KPRA had frozen to death, the main force suddenly appeared in the border areas of Antu and Helong Counties and wiped out the “Maeda punitive force” at Hongqihe. What an astonishing blow this must have been to the Japanese!

The Battle of Hongqihe remains so conspicuous in my memory because it is a major battle along with other major battles, such as Pochonbo, Jiansanfeng, Dongning county town and Fusong county town. This is also why I so clearly remember Maeda.

Company Commander Maeda of the “police punitive force” in Helong

County, was, in fact, a small fry for the KPRA to deal with. Nevertheless, he was as rabidly against us as Commander Wang in Fusong and Ri To Son in Antu. Although low in rank, he found notoriety in the end because he was destroyed while attempting to wipe out the Headquarters of the Korean revolution.

During that period we were dealing repeated blows at the enemy, while at the same time relaxing and carrying out training now and then according to our plan for large-unit circling operations.

About one month before the Battle of Hongqihe, as we were conducting military and political training in the secret camp at Baishitan, the enemy came in to raid the secret camp. We struck the enemy like lightning and then slipped away towards Antu. This was the beginning of the second stage of the large-unit circling operations.

From the very start of the second stage we had to face many difficulties. Because Rim Su San at the secret camp in Dongpaizi had neglected the mission given by Headquarters, we had to abandon the planned route and strike out on an alternate route that ran through the uninhabited region northeast of Mt. Paektu.

It was said that there were many map surveyors in the Japanese army, but they dared not venture into that region, so they left it white on the map. For this reason it was called a “white region”.

On leaving Baishitan we planned to march across the white region, fire off our guns once again at Musan and Samjang in the homeland, then return to the central area of Antu, China, via Helong County. This was our new plan for the second stage of the large-unit circling operations.

After fighting a battle at Laoshuihe, we marched across the Toudaobai, Erdaobai and Sandaobai Rivers towards the southern tip of Antu County.

We passed through the white region with great difficulty. At that time the great snowdrifts and blizzards were our greatest enemies. It was hard to endure the cold and hunger. The biggest problem was that we often lost our way. As everything was white, we could not judge where we were, nor could we see any landmarks. As we approached Damalugou, we had run out of

provisions and our clothes and shoes were all worn out. We therefore raided Damalugou to capture supplies. *Damalugou* means “large elk valley” and *Xiaomalugou* “small elk valley”. In those days the elk of Damalugou used to cross the Tuman River to graze in the meadows of Korea and then return to Damalugou in winter to feed on purple eulalia.

In Damalugou, the base of an enemy “punitive” force, there was also the headquarters of a company of rangers. The place could be called a stronghold of the enemy “punitive” force in the border area. The Japanese imperialists plundered great amounts of timber for wartime use from lumber companies and timber forests in the area.

Before the battle we dispatched a reconnaissance party to Damalugou. On their return, the scouts reported that they had seen strange tall men with blue eyes there. They said the men had long noses and that the backs of their hands were covered with thick hair. They did not know who these people were. I sent a man to check on them. He reported that the men were all Russians working as drivers at the lumber station. They were from the families which had supported the white army. There were many Russians in the Harbin area. I had seen them when I was in Harbin in the summer of 1930.

While the enemy’s main force was out on a mission one day, we took Damalugou by surprise. The Russian drivers immediately offered my men gold rings, apparently taking us for bandits. When my men declined, they cocked their heads as if to say they had never before seen such strange people in this world. Their ideology was obviously a very backward one.

We captured an enormous amount of wheat flour at Damalugou, which we distributed to the local people, one sack for each person. We captured so much that it was impossible for the guerrillas to carry it all. The workers of the lumber station volunteered to carry the remainder for us.

We planned to persuade the Russians to help us get away by truck to some distance, but I was told that they would not cooperate. I sent a man who knew Russian to talk to them, and he managed to persuade the drivers to do the job.

At that time I talked to the Russians. I asked them why they were living in

China and not in their own motherland. They replied that the Communist Party did not welcome the people of landlord and capitalist origin like themselves. They added that their fathers were guilty because they had been opposed to the socialist revolution, but that they themselves were not guilty of anything. I asked them whether they would build socialism shoulder to shoulder with the communists if they were sent to the Soviet Union; they answered that they would.

Among those who carried captured goods for us there was also a worker from Japan. I heard that he said good things about us on his return. He said: "I thought the soldiers of the revolutionary army were excellent men. They were all on our side, on the side of us workers. Though they knew that I was a Japanese, they did not discriminate against me and told me that Japanese workers, hand in hand with Korean workers, should fight Japanese imperialism." The superintendent of the lumber station caught him saying this and sent him off somewhere.

Our attack on Damalugou alerted the enemy forces in the Antu and Helong areas, who were hell-bent on annihilating us. Leading this force were Unami, commander of the "police punitive force" of Helong County and head of the police affairs department of the county; and Maeda.

The police authorities of Helong County had organized the "police punitive force" at the time we were fighting a series of large battles on the Tuman River after our campaign in the Musan area in May 1939. The force had been organized hastily for the sole purpose of containing and annihilating our army. Composed of four companies, including the one led by Maeda and two railway guard companies, it was running wild under the command of the head of the Jiandao district "punitive" force, trying to "mop up" the guerrilla army.

They had thought us to be far in the north. When we appeared in the areas bordering Helong and Antu Counties all of a sudden and raided Damalugou, the Helong "police punitive force" set off its entire force on a desperate pursuit of us.

As I learned later, Maeda launched himself into the "punitive" operations against us with even more bravado than others, bragging frequently that his

company would destroy the main force of Kim Il Sung's unit for sure.

The "Nozoe Punitive Command" set 10,000 *yuan* as a price on my head. Another source said that an even larger sum had been offered.

When you consider that the public security authorities of Manchukuo set its "police reward" as 10 to 200 *yuan*, the highest reward in the name of the Public Security Minister, you can see that 10,000 *yuan* was an enormous sum indeed.

Having served as a junior policeman in Korea, and then in Manchuria under the garrison command subordinate to the metropolitan police office and as a head of police stations in areas bordering Korea, Maeda had received a reward from the Public Security Minister for the "exploits" he had performed in the "clean-up operations" in the Jiandao area.

On hearing the news that we had raided Damalugou, Maeda went into a rage, raving that he was going to wipe out the guerrilla army. He wrote pledges in blood to this effect and held a grand ceremony of departure for the "punitive" troops. The joint "punitive" forces of army and police of Japan and Manchukuo were spreading out to encircle the vast forests at the foot of Mt. Paektu, throwing out "such a dragnet that even an ant would find it hard to escape".

Anticipating that the "punitive" force would follow in our wake without fail, we drew up an elusive plan to dodge it. First we sent a small unit, together with the 40 civilians who had carried the captured supplies for us, back to Damalugou, making sure that they left confusing footprints all over the place.

As a result the enemy lamented that they had failed to catch the guerrillas, whom they had taken such great pains to track, as they had been misled by the footprints. They then combed the forests every day, shouting that they would not be fooled again by the guerrillas and that Kim Il Sung could not very well have sunk into the earth, however elusive he might be. They were convinced that they would locate the Headquarters of the communist army easily enough if they combed Mt. Paektu.

After throwing the enemy off our track, we gave our main force military

and political training at the secret camp in Hualazi, having a good rest while we were at it. Then we resumed our march towards Musan. The enemy troops who were trekking about in the Hualazi area in search of our whereabouts, finally detected us and began to tail us.

On the march we met peasants who had been drafted to carry supplies for the "punitive" force. They told us that the enemy soldiers on our tail numbered about 1,000. It was March, but both we and the enemy were experiencing difficulties while on the move owing to the waist-deep snow. Nevertheless, the enemy was marching faster than we, as they were following us along our trodden trail. To make matters worse, my men began to be afflicted with emaciation. At first they numbered only a few, but later they increased to 15.

I asked Rim Chun Chu how he was planning to treat the patients. Rim, a political officer of the guerrilla army, also had rich clinical experience. He replied that he would give them opium. I granted approval, saying that he should do his best, either by using opium or through any other method he could think of.

Taking opium helped the patients, but they were not well enough to march. We had to put a distance between us and the enemy, but the pace of our march had slowed down because of the sick men, and soon the enemy was only about four to six kilometres behind us.

The Damalugou, on the upper reaches of the Hongqi River, consists of several streams. We arrived at one of these streams just as it was getting dark. We found an old house that had been used by lumberjacks; I posted a guard and told my men to stop and take a break there. Unless they had sufficient rest, we would not be able to continue fighting. As they were well aware that the enemy were on their heels, they were somewhat uneasy to hear my order to stop marching and take a rest in the house, but seeing me lying down, they relaxed.

I decided to attack the "Maeda punitive force" in a valley on the Hongqi. I chose the valley as a place of ambush because I calculated that the enemy, who had been to Hualazi, would pass through the valley without fail on their

way back to their base. Moreover, its terrain features were very favourable for an ambush. As the chief of the police affairs department of Helong County said later, the terrain features of the valley were "so unfavourable that no tactics would work" if one was caught up in an ambush there.

On hearing my choice of the spot for an ambush, O Paek Ryong asked me, "Since the enemy are well aware of our tactics, General, will they walk into such a trap?" His doubt was reasonable. The enemy was most afraid of our method of allurement and ambush. They named it the "net tactic" and carefully studied measures to counter it. "Don't be caught in Kim Il Sung's net"–this became a catch-phrase among them. You can imagine the hard time they had because of this tactic. They tried as far as possible to avoid places where guerrillas would find it favourable to lie in ambush. O Paek Ryong had this in mind when he spoke.

I considered that the enemy, aware of our "nets", would be convinced that the communist army would not repeat this tactic, so I decided to position my men in ambush in the valley on the Hongqi and fight a battle there. In other words, I planned to use once again the tactic the enemy had concluded we would no longer employ.

Next day we marched along the ridge of a mountain toward Xiaomalugou before descending into the valley. The mountains on both sides of the valley were unique. On the right, toward the upper reaches of the river, stood three peaks looking like three brothers. They were ideal places for an ambush. In addition there was a peak on the left with a small forest at the foot of it, which was also a favourable terrain feature for us.

I held a meeting of commanding officers and organized the battle. I positioned the machine-gun platoon and Guard Company on the three peaks on the right side of the valley and the 7th and 8th Regiments on the fringe of the peak on the left. Next, I ordered each unit to climb down to the valley, then climb up the heights again, erasing their uphill footprints before lying down in the designated positions for the ambush. Finally, I sent a decoy party to resume marching along the valley, leaving as many footprints as possible. I also positioned a group, led by Son Thae Chun, on the northern side of the

first height in the valley to cut off any enemy retreat. The decoy party would block the enemy advance at the end of the valley.

That day we fought a battle on the Hongqi, as planned. It suddenly began to thaw, and the snow on the sunny side melted. The paths became muddy.

The enemy appeared in the valley of the Hongqi at the wane of day in the afternoon. I looked at the entrance of the valley through binoculars and found an enemy scout party, larger than usual for a scout party. It was their habit to dispatch one or two scouts, but this time they numbered nearly 10. It suggested that all the "punitive" forces in Hualazi were swarming in. The scout were followed by a point.

As the point was marching past the last height, an officer with a sword at his waist entered the valley. I later learned that this was Maeda himself. The head of the enemy's main body was walking deep into the trap. Maeda stopped and carefully examined the footprints in the snow and the features peculiar to the valley.

I guessed he was probably thinking about dispatching a scouting party up to the heights, or about withdrawing his unit altogether. However, Maeda, extremely exhausted from his ten days of lost labour in the mountains, seemed to be off his guard just at the fateful moment when he ought to have been thinking and judging the situation coolly. Seeing Maeda standing under a lone tree, his subordinate officers gathered around him. Maeda, leaning on his sword, gave some instructions to them. In the meantime the main body of the enemy was pouring steadily into the area of our ambush.

Taking advantage of this golden opportunity, I fired my signal shot.

Half of the enemy was killed by our very first strike. Surprised by crossfire from the right and left sides of the valley, Maeda instantly dispersed his marching column on the spot and attempted to direct his main force to the height in the north to capture it, but was frustrated by our flanking fire from the bushes in the west. As the situation grew more and more disastrous for him, he ordered a charge, apparently determined to fight a do-or-die battle. Then, drawing his sword, he led the charge himself. Though seriously wounded, he commanded the battle until the moment he fell.

The remaining enemy put up a desperate fight. Most of Maeda's men did not lay down their weapons until they were mowed down. Except for about 30 men, who laid down arms and surrendered, all the enemy soldiers were killed. Their casualties numbered about 140.

In the Battle of Hongqihe my men fought very bravely. O Paek Ryong, the new regimental commander succeeding O Jung Hup, who had fallen in the Battle of Liukesong, fought with great audacity. Kim Il, too, showed great efficiency as the head of the shock troops.

We searched the battlefield after the battle and captured a large amount of booty, including a wireless equipment and tens of thousands of cartridges. It was difficult to dispose of all the weapons, for we had more than enough of them. We kept a number of the captured weapons to replace the outmoded ones still being carried by some of my men, and wrapped the remainder in oil paper and either buried them in the ground or stored them in the hollow trunks of trees for a future great event.

After we had finished the disposal of our booty, we discovered the "Fengtian unit" of the puppet Manchukuo army building campfires and watching us in a place not far away from us. Too scared of us to attack, they merely fired a few blind shots. I ordered O Paek Ryong to set up all the captured machine-guns and fire a couple of rounds at them so as to threaten them and test their efficiency at the same time.

That night O Paek Ryong, reporting that the "Fengtian unit" was sneaking towards us, asked me if we should strike back at them.

I said to him, "Leave them alone. Why bother hitting mere on-lookers? It's better to send them back alive, then they can tell the world how Maeda's unit was destroyed."

We discovered that Maeda had made his men write their wills before the battle. We found this out after reading a note in the pocket of an officer's uniform while searching the battlefield. The note was wrapped in a piece of silk cloth, and its content was very grim. According to the POWs, Maeda gathered his men before departing for battle and made them write their last testaments. He told them that their company, as part of the district "punitive"

force, had to fight with Kim Il Sung's army, and that to win victory in the battle, they needed to cultivate *Yamato Tamashii* (Japanese spirit) and be determined to die for the Emperor. He even had a box made for the ashes of his own dead body.

On hearing this, I realized that Maeda, though only the company commander of a "punitive" force, was also an evil henchman of ultra-nationalist forces.

I think it was the militarism and ultra-nationalism of Japan that turned Maeda into an extremist of national chauvinism and an anti-communist fanatic.

The Japanese imperialists resorted to all means and methods to transform the population of Japan into rabid supporters of ultra-nationalism, which often hides under the cloak of patriotism. This is why the virus of ultra-nationalism finds its way easily into the hearts of people not awakened ideologically.

As I have mentioned earlier, the militarists of Japan persistently indoctrinated Japanese youth and children with the aggressive idea that Japan would prosper only when it conquered Manchuria. It was said that they even baked slogans into such foods as bread and biscuits, which people consume every day, urging them into overseas expansion. This meant that while swallowing their food they were encouraged to think about swallowing other nations' territories. When propaganda is as persistent as this, its virus must penetrate people's minds.

Some of our people think that the bourgeoisie have no ideology, but they are mistaken. Just as communists have communism, they also have bourgeois ideology. And they persuade their faithful henchmen to espouse their ideology as well.

On the issue of indoctrination in the spirit of the Imperial Way in the Japanese army, some commanding officers in our revolutionary army were at one point teaching our men only about its deceitfulness and absurdity. This consequently gave rise to the incorrect view of Japanese soldiers as insensible robots only carrying rifles. This was a very dangerous way to think.

That we emphasize the political and ideological superiority of our own army does not mean that our enemy has no ideology. While we see our ideology as being superior to the enemy's, this does not mean that we can underestimate the enemy as having no distinct beliefs. I instructed our political officers that they should not place all their emphasis on the vulnerability of the enemy's ideology, and that they should not ignore the fact that the Japanese do inculcate ideology in their soldiers and fill them with a most evil spirit of anti-communism.

In the Battle of Hongqihe the enemy drank a truly bitter cup. They learned the harsh lesson that, however zealously they might track the KPRA, no victory would await them and that instead they would experience a painful end, as the "Maeda punitive force" had done. They also found out that no force in the world could defeat the KPRA.

In this battle we demonstrated to the whole world that the KPRA was going strong, winning one victory after another, and that however severe the trials, it would never yield or perish.

The battle exerted a good influence on the people in the homeland. As the Hongqi was within hailing distance from Korea, the news of Maeda's defeat in the fight with the revolutionary army spread like wildfire across the Tuman River into Korea. The people, who had been worrying about the fate of the KPRA, drew great strength from the news. After the battle they never again believed the propaganda that the revolutionary army was routed.

The battle occasioned widespread discussions about the power of the KPRA. It was a very good thing that people trusted the KPRA and entrusted their future to it entirely. It helped the anti-Japanese, patriotic forces of Korea promote an all-people resistance with greater confidence, looking forward to the glorious event of national liberation. This was our greatest gain in the Battle of Hongqihe.

In contrast, for the Japanese and Manchukuo army and police, who had been bragging that the anti-Japanese guerrilla war in the northeast would come to an end when Kim Il Sung's army was wiped out, this was an unhappy bolt from the blue and a tragic defeat.

The police authorities of Helong County, frightened by the annihilation of the Maeda unit, had to admit that they had not exactly been blessed by Divine Providence; they also confessed that the defeat of the Maeda unit had been unavoidable because of the adroit tactics of the KPRA. The destruction of the "Maeda punitive force" also meant the frustration of the "special clean-up campaign for maintaining public peace in the southeastern area", in which the Japanese and Manchukuo top brass had invested so much effort.

Unami, Maeda's immediate superior and chief of the police affairs department of Helong County, returned to Japan after the defeat in the war. He left this article:

"It was from 1938 to 1941 that I, as a Manchukuo policeman in Jiandao Province, took part in the punitive operations against the anti-Japanese army, led by General Kim Il Sung. ...

"It was hard to collect information, but a relatively reliable source said that 'General Kim Il Sung finished school in Jilin City. With high academic records, he had an outstanding ability to make political judgements. He also had organizational and leadership ability and enjoyed great popularity.'...

"It seemed that his outstanding leadership talent found full expression during the anti-Japanese guerrilla struggle. We experienced especially hard times because of his deft luring operations and ambushes. ...

"On March 11, 1940, Damalugou, in the gorge along the Hongqi, was raided by Kim Il Sung's army. Damalugou was a base of the punitive force that also housed the headquarters of a company of rangers. The headquarters was attacked, the motor-car repair shop was burnt down and weapons, ammunition, food and clothing were plundered.

"Nunogami, commander of the district punitive force, ordered the police battalion of the punitive force to trace and annihilate Kim Il Sung's army in cooperation with Ooba's and Akabori's units of the Japanese army.

"I relayed the order to the company, led by Maeda Takeichi. On March 25 Maeda's company encountered Kim Il Sung's army not far from Damalugou and fought a fierce battle, but the whole company, including the commander himself, was annihilated. It was trapped in an ambush. The annihilation of Maeda's company had a shocking impact on the punitive force.

"As Kim Il Sung's army was familiar with the geographical features and employed highly variable tactics, the punitive operations in forests hardly succeeded. ...

"At that time Kim Il Sung's guerrilla army was in high spirits, saying such things as, 'We are the Korean People's Revolutionary Army led by General Kim Il Sung. There is no compromise in the fight for the liberation of the country,' and 'The punitive force is a most welcome guest, for it supplies us with weapons, food and clothing.'

"The Democratic People's Republic of Korea is now achieving a remarkable development under the leadership of Premier Kim Il Sung.

"I am convinced, from my own experience, that the Korean people, advancing under the leadership of this outstanding leader, will surely achieve the reunification of their country."

Recollecting the Battle of Hongqihe later, the great leader stressed the need to heighten vigilance against the revival of militarism. Here is what he said about the latter:

The ruling authorities of Japan are said to have awakened from their wild daydream of world domination after the Second World War. If this is true, then it is good for Japan and fortunate for the people of neighbouring countries.

Nevertheless, in view of the conduct of Japanese authorities, we still have to wonder whether or not they continue to dream of world domination and their "Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere". Many reactionaries in Japan have not yet admitted the crime of having invaded and plundered Korea and several other countries in Asia and of having killed millions of people, nor have they yet made reparations for their crimes. Worse still, they have not admitted their most heinous crime, that of having taken 200,000 women and girls as sex slaves and of having treated them with greater cruelty than they would animals. On the contrary, they are now seeking to become a political and military power on the basis of their economy.

Neo-fascists are now manoeuvring in European countries as well.

This also is highly dangerous.

We must clearly sharpen our vigilance against the revival of militarism.

NOTES

1. ***Jongsori***–A weekly newspaper of the Korean People's Revolutionary Army that began publication at Matanggou Secret Camp in Mengjiang County in December 1937. p.9

2. ***Sogwang***–A publication of the Korean People's Revolutionary Army, launched in Donggang, Fusong County, in May 1937 as a weekly political newspaper and later issued as a magazine. p.9

3. **The "Hyesan incident"**–Two rounds of wholesale arrests the Japanese army and police conducted in the autumn of 1937 and 1938 in order to track down and suppress the Korean revolutionary organizations and revolutionaries in the areas along the Amnok River. p.11

4. **Independence Army**–Korean nationalist armed groups organized and active in southern, eastern and northern Manchuria, China, to fight against the Japanese aggressors after their occupation of Korea in 1905. The army ceased to exist in 1938. p.20

5. **The Paeksan Armed Group**–Organized by Kang Jin Sok, a maternal uncle of the great leader Comrade Kim Il Sung, with independence fighters active in Phyongan Province as its backbone. p.34

6. **Hong Jong U**–A patriot, who, while serving in the military police of the Japanese imperialists from 1919 on, gave a great deal of help to Korean independence campaigners, especially to Kim Hyong Jik, father of the respected

leader Comrade Kim Il Sung and an outstanding leader of the Korean national-liberation movement. p.59

7. **The Liaoxi-Rehe area**–An area situated in Northeast China, with Liaoxi being west of the Liao River in the western part of Liaoning Province; and Rehe as the former Rehe Province, the area including the present northeastern part of Hebei Province and the western part of Liaoning Province. p.61

8. **Internment village**–A village that was created by the Japanese imperialist aggressors in which people were herded together and kept out of contact with the Korean People's Revolutionary Army. A typical village was surrounded by a high wall, with gun emplacement towers on its four corners to prevent food, clothing or other supplies from being smuggled out to the KPRA. The enemy's army and police forces were stationed in these villages. p.72

9. **The DIU**–The Down-with-Imperialism Union, a genuine communist revolutionary organization and the first of its kind of our country, organized by the great leader Comrade Kim Il Sung in Huadian on October 17, 1926. The DIU was a new type of revolutionary organization completely different from the nationalist and communist factions that preceded it. It set as its immediate task the defeat of Japanese imperialism and the liberation and independence of Korea. Its final objective was to build socialism and communism in Korea, then go on to destroy imperialism and to build communism throughout the world. Its formation was the starting point of the Workers' Party of Korea, which later grew out of the DIU. p.89

10. **Prince Regent** (1820-98)–Ri Ha Ung, father of Ko Jong, the 26th king of the Ri Dynasty. The prince held the real power from 1863 to 1873. p.90

11. **The Hwasong Uisuk School**–A two-year military and political school, founded by Korean nationalists at the beginning of 1925 with a view to training cadres for the Independence Army. The great leader Comrade Kim Il Sung was enrolled in this school in June 1926, but, disillusioned by the nationalist ideas taught at the

school and by its old-fashioned military training, left the school in December of the same year to conduct the communist movement in real earnest on a higher scale in wider areas. It was while he was studying here that he organized the Down-with-Imperialism Union. p.94

12. ***The Tale of Sim Chong***–A novel written in the early 18th century. It was based on a folk tale about the performance of one's filial duties. In the novel the heroine Sim Chong devotes herself to her blind father, taking the place of her mother, who died early. The strength of her filial service and love cure her father of his blindness. p.104

13. **The Society for Rallying Comrades**–The name of the first Party organization, formed by the great leader Comrade Kim Il Sung at Kalun on July 3, 1930. The Society for Rallying Comrades was an important parent body in forming and expanding the basic organizations of the Party. p.106

14. **The Harvest Moon Day**–The 15th day of the eighth lunar month, a traditional autumn holiday celebrated for many centuries. On this day the Korean people hold a memorial service before the tombs of their ancestors. With the approach of the harvest, they celebrate their successful work during the year with a variety of festive activities. p.127

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